

*Approved by the T. B. C., Madras and Cochin*

# TALES FROM TENNYSON

ENOCH ARDEN

GARETH AND LYNETTE

(RETOLD)

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*Fourth Edition—Revised*

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## PREFACE

IN the single prize-poem of the late Viscount Morley, we are told, the examiners were able to glean the makings of a sound and manly prose style—a prophecy that was amply realized indeed. And we have many an example of impassioned prose rich in rhythmic movement and delicate grace, as when, in his ecstasies of opium, De Quincy “pours forth into streams of wondrous eloquence,” or when Ingersall pleads for the liberty of children that are so lovable with their “rippling river of laughter.”

As between poetic diction and the language of prose, we may, perhaps, steer midway, and clear alike of the levelling precepts of Wordsworth on the one hand, and the Aristotelian theory of essential difference on the other. It may indeed be permitted to us to claim for “dull prose” some of that graceful cadence and sweet harmony which, in a larger measure and with greater appropriateness, belong to the sublimer art. Nor need we deny to prose, in all entirety, that “music and harmony within” whose outward development is said to form the metrical garb.

The cultivation of such a prose-style may well lie within the ambition of every student of literature. And to such, the poets and, in particular, Tennyson among the rest with his keen sense of art, must ever supply the best and most inspiring models. An early introduction to them, therefore, such as this little book aims at furnishing, may fairly be hoped to pave the way for the sub-conscious assimilation of that charm and grace of language which, whether in prose or in verse, must ever at once please the ear and elevate the heart.

Again, it has been said that the essence of poetry is fiction. Narrative poetry “compresses long controversies into a concise argument, and condenses the mass of incident and action, but selection, combination, refinement and colouring,” in short, by its direct appeal to one’s sympathy and understanding. An early familiarity with such models may well be calculated to foster the habit of direct, concise and clear expression of even subtle shades of thought—a habit not the less useful in the making of a sound and vigorous prose-style for its coming down from poetic sources.

To the inimitable Lambs belongs, by pre-eminence, the art of rendering the works of great poets in sweet and charming prose. Even so great a scholar as Quiller-Couch, in his “Historical Plays of Shakespeare,” despairs of success in that art in any measure comparable to that of the “Tales from Shakespeare.” In

lesser hands, indeed, the art must inevitably dwindle into much smaller proportions of excellence. And the only excuse that these could offer to themselves for the venture is the greatness of the art itself, which will perforce shine out in spite of the imperfections of the venturer.

*Enoch Arden* belongs to the collection of poems which goes by the name of *English Idylls*, and of which it is one of the most famous. In it Tennyson takes the material for true poetry from among the lowly people that constitute the bulk of English life, and like Wordsworth, but with a melody all his own, tells a tale of the beauty and heroism, patient suffering and noble sacrifice, that lie concealed in humble men and women all the world over.

*Gareth and Lynette* is the first of the series of poems known as *The Idylls of the King*, which, considered as a unified poem, shadow "Sense at War with Soul." The story of young Gareth sets before us "the spring-time of Arthur's glory, when the Table Round was yet indeed a model for the world. No sensual taint has yet crept in, or at least none is visible." King Arthur is here seen at his best, holding court in his selfless glory, meting equal laws to a savage race, whose reclamation from brutish barbarism to Christian charity and love is the burning theme of his ardent soul.

The two narratives are among the most popular of Tennyson's poems, and contain perhaps the best of the

poet's excellence of art and thought, quite as much, perhaps, as almost any of his other great poems. May this early little foretaste of the rich feast in store lead to a more sumptuous enjoyment in the years ahead!

# ENOCH ARDEN

1870-1871

RM. MUTHIAH  
ARTIST  
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(RAMNAD DIST.)

## ENOCH ARDEN

### I

And built their castles of dissolving sand  
To watch them overflowed.

MORE than a hundred years ago, among the chalky cliffs that lay in long lines along the coast of Devonshire, there was a small village of simple fisher-folk. The village lay in a chasm left by the broken lines of cliffs. Viewed from the sea, red roofs of houses could be seen clustering together beyond the stretch of foam and yellow sands. Near about the cluster of houses was a narrow wharf; further beyond was a mouldering church, from which a long street led up to the mill. Higher up and farther, and almost touching the sky as it seemed, was the soft, green meadow-land dotted with Danish barrows. In a cup-like hollow of the down was a green plot of hazelwood, filled with nutters in the Autumn season.

Here, upon this beach, a hundred years and more ago, three children could be seen playing together, who came of different families. They were Annie Lee, the prettiest little girl in the port, Philip Ray, the miller's only son, and Enoch Arden, a rough sailor-lad whose parents had perished in a winter ship-wreck. The children played among the waste and lumber of the shore—hard coils of rope, black fishing nets, rusty anchors and boats drawn up to dry.

With deft hands and with patient toil, the children would attempt to raise castles of sand on the beach—castles that seemed, however, to take a pleasure in teasing the young ones; for they tumbled down many a time before they could be coaxed to stand as heaped-up walls and roofs. Then again, when, perhaps once in many a time, the touchy castles took some shape, on would come a wave from the sea, and wash the edifices away. Then the children's fleeing feet, overtaken by the breaking waves, would leave their tiny footprints on the sand, while the waters gathered back to form into fresh waves again—footprints that were daily left to be daily washed away.

A narrow cave ran beneath a cliff near where the children played. There they often stayed, and

played at keeping house. Annie was the mistress of the house; and of the two boys, one would play the host and the other, the guest. They played host and guest by turns; one day it was Enoch's turn to be the host; and on the next, the coveted honour would pass on to Philip. It was so arranged by the willing consent of both the boys, and ratified by the little mistress of the house.

But Enoch was a masterful lad, and, at times, he would hold possession for days together, saying, "This is my house, and this, my little wife." The gentle Philip would be roused to protest, "This house is mine to-day, and so is she my wife, as she was yours yesterday." In the quarrel that ensued, the stronger Enoch would hold his own; and the soft little Philip would, with eyes filled with tears, and in helpless wrath, shriek out, "I hate you, Enoch." At this, the gentle, little Annie would be sore distressed. Her large eyes brimming with tears of sympathy and goodness, she would beg them both to desist from quarrel; and she would save the situation in her childlike, innocent way by saying she would be the "little wife to both." Thus was the quarrel saved many a time, and thus did the children grow together in tender affection till they passed out of their rosy childhood.

## II

Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past  
Bearing a life-long hunger in his heart.

In time the little lads grew up into full-blooded youths. Their joyous hearts glowed with warm feelings and tender affections. Keenly alive to the precious gifts of life, both fixed their hearts on Annie Lee, the sweet companion of their boyhood days. She was now a young and graceful maiden, who had outgrown her sweet and buoyant girlhood. Enoch, who was ever free, frank and bold, spoke out his mind openly; but Philip, whose mind was by nature of a profounder bent, went on loving in silence.

As for the maiden, she seemed to love both with equal love; indeed, sometimes it looked as if she was even kinder to Philip than to Enoch. But she did not know her own mind; and if the truth must be told, she loved only Enoch. But she would in all honesty have denied it, had she been questioned.

Enoch was poor, and he had to work and save that so he might provide a home for his wife, and purchase a boat for himself to ply his trade. But he was full of purpose and of firm resolve; and ever

keeping his object before his eyes, he worked hard and spent his earnings with the utmost care. He worked with great patience and perseverance ; and soon he came to be known for leagues along the coast as the luckiest and boldest of the fisher-folk. For cool courage and presence of mind in times of peril, he had not his equal. He had sought and found service for a year on board a merchantman, and was thereby enabled to qualify himself as a full-blown sailor. He was bold, intrepid and strong. Risking his own life, he had saved three men from being drowned in the sea. And thus he grew to be loved by all ever more and more; and before he completed his twenty-first year, he had purchased a boat for himself and provided a home for Annie Lee. It was a neat little house, nestling in a long row of houses, half-way up the narrow street that led to the mill.

Now it happened that, on a bright autumn evening, when the sun shed his golden glory on the pleasant little village of the fisher-folk, the younger people gave themselves a holiday, and went to the hazelwood to gather nuts. Annie Lee was on the hill, and so was Enoch too. But Philip went an hour later; for his father was on sick-bed then, and in need of help. The wood was farther down on

the hill, and the younger folk were making merry there. On climbing up the hill, Philip saw a sight that turned his heart cold with bitter grief ; for there, before him, were Annie and Enoch, seated hand in hand, and apart from the rest. Enoch's large, grey eyes were lit up with the light of a calm and holy love. His fair, weather-beaten face shone with a strange and serene happiness. The eyes and faces of the pair told their own tale. Philip knew at once that she had given her heart away to Enoch, and it could be no longer his. In silent sorrow Philip left the place unseen of any, and quietly traced his way to the deeper parts of the wood. There he gave free vent to his anguish alone and unseen. When it grew late, he rose and slowly wended his way back to his house with a heavy load on his heart that seemed bound to last for all his life.

## III

Seven happy years of health and competence ;

Then came a change, as all things human change.

IN good time Enoch married Annie Lee. It was a merry day, and the merry bells rang to summon

the village-folk to the sacred ceremony. The loving pair spent seven happy years of health and ease, and knew no care or want. The days glided into months, and the months into years; and the time flew so fast indeed with them that they scarcely seemed to know how long it was. The growth of time was marked by the growth of their love, while Enoch made a worthy living by honest toil.

In good time the happy pair were blessed with children too. Their first child was a daughter; and with her birth a new wish came into Enoch's mind. It was a good and noble wish, that his sweet child should be given the benefits of a better up-bringing than had been either his or Annie's lot in their childhood. With this end ever in view, Enoch began from now to save, out of his earnings, all he could. And this wish grew the more when, two years later, a boy was born to cheer the lonely mother, while Enoch was away roughing it on the wild seas. It also happened now that Enoch often rode on his white horse to the distant village; for his great spoils from the sea were not only much in demand in the market, but had been bespoken for every Friday at the Squire's Hall.

While thus Enoch was toiling and saving, with all the zeal and care of a fond father, and

forming great hopes for his beloved children, a great change occurred in his fortune; for it is the way of the world that all things must come to an end in their time, "yielding place to new." Ten miles to the north of this little port, another and larger port came to be opened; and at times Enoch would go there for work by either land or sea. While thus he chanced to be there on a certain day, working on a ship in the harbour, he slipped in climbing up a mast, and fell. When he was lifted up, it was found that a limb was broken by the fall, and he had to remain there some time to mend his broken limb.

While he slowly recovered, another child was born to him, a sickly son. To add to his troubles, a man rose in competition and snatched away his business from his hands. Enoch was by nature of a steady and serious disposition, and ever god-fearing. But now misfortune and misery pursued him one after another; and as he lay on his sick-bed thinking of his helplessness in this hour of trial, his mind was filled with fears, and his faith in God began to be shaken. The minutes dragged into hours, and the hours into days, and he fell a prey to gloomy thoughts. He fancied to himself that his children were in want and misery and his beloved Annie was reduced to beggary. In this fearful

despondency, however, his innate faith in Providence soon returned to him; and he prayed to God to spare the dear ones from misery and sorrow.

Even as he thus prayed to God, solace came to him. The owner of the ship in which he met with his accident came to see him, having heard of his hapless state. He had known the goodness and virtue of Enoch, and had always a great regard for him. And this good master of the ship brought, as it seemed, succour to Enoch in the shape of an offer and an opportunity to mend his broken fortune. The vessel was to sail to China, carrying merchandise. The place of Boatswain was still vacant on the ship. Would Enoch take the place and sail to China? There were yet many weeks for the ship to sail. Enoch had time to get well and prepare for the long voyage. To Enoch the offer seemed a god-send in response to his own prayer; and he accepted it with great joy.

#### IV

Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans  
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well.

Now fresh hopes began to dawn on Enoch. He felt as if he had been already delivered from

the misery and misfortune that had overtaken him. These now seemed to vanish like a cloud-flake that had for a moment cast a shadow on a patch of ground below, but presently melted away before the golden rays of the ascending sun. But soon, alas, other thoughts began to weigh on his mind, thoughts of wife and children. How were they to be provided for? And, O, the sadness of parting from his dear beloved wife, and his sweet little children, whose smiling faces he might not look upon for days and months!

Above all, the question of making provision for the family occupied his mind for a long time. He pondered long, and at last made up his mind, much against his will, to sell his boat. He had loved it so well for its many happy associations. How many a rough sea had he not weathered in it! Every little part and feature of the much-loved boat were familiar to him, as the features of a noble horse are familiar to its proud master. It was so hard for Enoch to sell his boat. But he saw no other way out of the difficulty, and he made up his mind to make the sacrifice for the good of his wife and children: for they were far more dear to his heart. And with the funds which the sale of the precious boat would bring him, he proposed to buy

goods and stores and set Annie forth in trade with all that was needed by seamen and their wives. With the profits that this trade would bring, she might maintain herself and the children, while he was away on distant seas.

The idea seemed very good to him. Rosy prospects rose in his mental vision. He, too, would trade on his own account in distant lands besides serving as a sailor on the merchantman. The good master of the ship had given him leave to carry in it his own little merchandise free of freight, and trade for his own profit. The service and the trade would bring him a double gain. At thought of this fine prospect, great hopes surged in his bounding heart. He would make, not one or two, but as many voyages as would enable him at last to become the master of a large craft, that so he might with larger profits lead an easier life. Thus, indeed, he could give his darlings the blessings of a good education and pass his days in peace, surrounded by a prosperous and happy family.

To this resolve he firmly held, and the happy prospect it evoked was ever present before his mental vision. So he soon recovered strength and spirits. He went back home to break the news of his new-found hopes to his wife, and make the

necessary preparations, before setting out on his voyage. But what a sad sight met him at home on his return! Poor Annie, pale and anxious, was nursing the sickly babe that had been born while he lay on his sick-bed. Care and suffering were writ large on her unhappy face. But at sight of his beloved form she bounded forward with a happy cry, and laid the feeble infant in his arms. He petted and fondled the child with all the love of a fond father. He gladdened the heart of the doting mother by giving vent to his joy on seeing the smiling little face and the beaming little eyes of her latest babe. It was a happy moment far too precious to be spoiled by the breaking of the news that so largely filled his thoughts. He had not the heart to mar, on any account, the holy bliss and supreme happiness of that blessed day. So that day passed, and on the next he gently broke the news to her.

## V

"I shall look upon your face no more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall look on yours."

EVER since she wore at church her wedding ring which Enoch gave to her, she had not crossed

his will in aught. All their married life had been unmarred by any opposing will of her own. In all things there had been a perfect understanding and an eagerness in her to do his will at any cost. But now Annie fought against his will, not however in any spirit of quarrel or opposition, but with tears and entreaties; for she felt forebodings of evil to come from this proposed voyage and his long separation from his home. She begged him, for his love of their dear children and herself, not to go. But he, for that self-same reason, let her plead in vain; for he knew full well that it was for their sake and out of his great love for them and hopes for their future happiness, that he wanted to go. If he cared aught for himself, he knew his greatest happiness lay at home, not in going. But he had no thought or care for himself at all. It was a sacrifice which he deemed necessary to make for their future good. So, grieving inwardly and sore against his will, he held firmly to his resolve, bearing with patience all her entreaties and arguments.

And now Enoch set about his preparations in good earnest. He parted with his old sea-friend the boat, and with the funds obtained by its sale, bought goods and stores for the shop. He then set

his hand to fitting up their little room facing the street with shelves and racks for the goods and stores. Thus was Enoch busy fitting out the shop, working all day long with hammer, axe, augur and saw, until the day of departure came. The incessant noise made by hammer and axe pierced Annie's heart with grief; and all the time she felt as if a scaffold were being raised to put herself to death thereon. At last the toil came to an end; the shop was fitted out with great skill and care. The space was too small for the goods and stores to be well arranged and garnered: but Enoch's skilful hand contrived to make it neat and close as Nature packs her blossom or her seedling. He was well pleased and satisfied that the work was completed so well, and in time; but he was tired, though, for Annie's sake, he would not mind it, but work on if need be. But now he betook himself to bed and heavily slept till morning broke and woke him up.

A great ordeal was before Enoch: for that day he was to bid farewell to his happy home and his dear Annie and the children. But he rose from his bed with a bold and cheerful heart. He laughed at Annie's fears; he never once believed they were well-founded; only, he felt sorry that

she should entertain such fears and forebodings of evil. Yet, brave as he was, he could not know the future; and he knelt down and sent up a fervent prayer to Heaven for blessings on his wife and children, whatever might happen to him abroad. It was one of those sacred moments in a man's life when the divine spirit in his nature is set in unison with God, and wins its way to His overflowing love.

Then, turning to Annie, he said, "This voyage will yet bring fair weather to all of us. Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me. For I will be back, Annie dear, before you know it." Then gently rocking the baby's cradle, he added, "And when I come back, Annie, this pretty, puny, weakly little one—I love him all the better for his being so—shall sit upon my knees, and I will tell him tales of foreign parts, and make him merry. Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go."

Gentle Annie gave a patient hearing to all that Enoch said; he described to her, so appealingly, the bright future and the many good things which, he hoped, would come to their children and to themselves from the voyage. She felt for the moment that perhaps all his hopes might yet come true. But then he passed

on to talk of graver matters, and spoke to her plainly and forcefully, as is the way of all rough sailors, on the inscrutable ways of God and the need for supreme trust in Him, *whatever might happen*. When he talked of such things, she could not understand him, though she quietly listened to all he said; for her mind was fixed elsewhere, and could not follow the sense of his words. She was even like the village girl who placed the pitcher underneath the spring, but minded not that it filled and overflowed, because her thoughts were fixed on the absent lover who used to fill the pitcher for her at the spring.

But when he had said all and ended, she broke her silence and said to him with all the force of a conviction born of intuition, "Oh Enoch, you are wise, and yet, for all your wisdom, I know full well that I shall look upon your face no more. I feel it so strongly in my heart."

But Enoch stood his ground firmly, and cut short her objections saying, "Well, then, I shall look on yours. Annie, the ship I sail in passes this way; you know the day. Get you a seaman's glass, look out for my face as the ship passes by, and laugh at all your fears."

## VI

She saw him not : and while he stood on deck  
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

THUS did Enoch seek to make light of Annie's fears. But when the final, painful hour of parting came, he said to her, "Annie, my girl, cheer up ; be comforted ; look to the babes ; and till I come back again, keep everything ship-shape ; for I must go ; there is no avoiding it. Fear no more for me. If you cannot put away your fears, cast all your cares on God. He is the sheet-anchor of all our hopes and fears, and He never fails to keep us safe from harm. Is not God present in those distant lands to which I go ? Wherever my lot may be cast for the time, I do not surely go away from Him. Nay, I cannot, nor any one else. He made the sea as well as the land. Both are His alike ; and He holds His sway over both alike."

So saying, Enoch rose, folded his wife fondly in his strong arms, and kissed his wonder-stricken little ones, who knew not what it was all about, or what was going on. The third, the sickly babe, was sleeping in the cradle after a restless night of illness. Annie bent to raise the child for being kissed by him in its turn. But Enoch said,

"No, wake him not, Annie; let him sleep. How should the child remember this parting kiss of mine? What can he know of such things, being but a babe?" So he stooped down and kissed the babe in the cradle. But Annie was not satisfied; and for sweet memory's sake, she clipped a curl from the baby's hair, and gave it to Enoch; and this he kept through all his future. But now he hastily caught his bundle, waved his hand by way of bidding adieu, being too greatly moved to trust himself to utterance, and went his way.

When the day came on which Enoch had said his ship would sail that way, Annie borrowed a glass, and kept on the watch for the passing ship that carried a cargo all too dear for her. But all her labours went in vain. Perhaps she could not fix the glass to suit her eyes: or perhaps her eyes were dim and her hand was tremulous. However it was, she missed a sight of him; and while he stood on deck waving his handkerchief, the moment and the vessel passed away.

Even to the last dip of the vanishing sail she watched the cruel ship patiently and with a heavy heart, and, at last, departed weeping for him, and in sore disappointment. Then, though she mourned for him quite as much as if he were dead, she

hardened her will, even as he had done his own, for the task before her. She bore in mind every little instruction that he had given for the conduct of the little shop and the upkeep of the helpless little household ; and she worked for both with unflagging zeal.

But poor Annie did not thrive in her trade ; and there were many reasons why she did not. She was not bred to barter ; so she knew not how to deal with the customers that came to buy goods of her. Nor had she the native shrewdness to keep an eye to her profit always. Nor yet, again, was she capable of lies, nor of the higgling practiced by the lower orders of men. She could not ask for over much and gradually reduce her price, seemingly to the satisfaction of the purchaser, but all the time keeping it high enough to leave herself a profit. She felt that things were going wrong, but knew not what to do to make them right ; and all the while she went on saying to herself, “O! What would Enoch say?” And, too, on occasions, when she was pressed for funds, she would sell her goods for less than what she gave in buying them. Thus day by day her business failed more and more, and she felt sad to

know it. Even thus she gained but a scanty sustenance, and went on living a life of melancholy, silent and uncomplaining, and looking forward to that news from Enoch which never came—news of his doings abroad.

## VII

“He will repay you : money can be repaid ;  
“But not kindness such as yours.”

MEANWHILE the third child that had been born sickly, grew yet sicklier, though the doting mother tended it with extraordinary love and care and unwearying attention. But, perhaps, her business often called her away from her child ; or, perhaps, her slender means could not provide what it wanted most ; or, again, perhaps, in the absence of expert advice which she could not command, she did not know what was good for the sickly little one. However it was, after a lingering illness, and all too unexpectedly, the child passed away, like the caged bird that finds its wings and flies away at the first opportunity. Sore at heart and sorrowing inwardly, the stricken mother gave her dear child a due burial.

During all these years of Annie's married life, Philip was eking out his time in silent sorrow for the great disappointment of his life. And all the time since Enoch had left, he had never once come to see her or render any little, timely help, though he must have known or guessed that things were faring ill with her. But now, in that same week that Annie buried her dear little child, true and loyal-hearted as he was, he blamed himself bitterly for having kept aloof so long, while he always hungered so much for her peace. "Surely," said he to himself, "I may see her now; it may be that yet I can be of some service to her, and of some little comfort too." With such benevolent thoughts in his mind, he went past the solitary room in front of Annie's house, paused for a moment at an inner door, then knocked thrice, and, since no one opened it, entered. Annie was seated there; her grief was yet too fresh, after the burial of her child, to make her wish to see any one. So when Philip came, she turned her face to the wall and wept. Then Philip, standing up, said falteringly, "Annie, I have come to ask a favour of you."

When she heard his words, she burst out

crying in the bitterness of her sorrow, "What favour can be sought of one so sad and so forlorn as I." He was half abashed by her touching words; but, after a hard struggle, he conquered his bashfulness by the strength of his great tenderness. Taking his seat by her side unasked, he said to her, "I came to speak to you of what he, your husband, Enoch, wished. I have always felt that in choosing him for your husband, you had chosen a better man than I. He was a strong man, and having fixed his heart on you, he set his hand steadily and firmly to do the thing he willed to do; and he gained his end unimpeded by obstacles.

"And why did he bring himself to leave you lonely and undertake this weary voyage? Surely it was not to see the world, or for the sake of his personal pleasure. You know what his object was. It was but to earn the means of giving his children a better bringing-up than either his or yours had been. That was the one great wish of his heart. Now, consider, Annie, how vexed he should be to find the precious period of their childhood lost. How sad and disappointed he should feel, if he could know that his children were running wild like

colts about the waste ! And, O, Annie, have we not known each other all our lives ? By the love you bear for him and his children, I beseech you, say not 'No' to me. I am rich and well-to-do. Now let me put the boy and girl to school. This is the favour that I have come to ask. I mean no offence to you, Annie. I do not mean to wound your feelings. When Enoch comes back, why, then, he shall pay it back to me."

He spoke with great diffidence and circumspection. She replied, her face still turned to the wall, "I cannot look you in the face. I seem so foolish and so broken down with grief. When you came in, my sorrow overpowered me; and now I am overwhelmed by your kindness. But Enoch lives; of that I am full well convinced. And he will surely repay you; money can be repaid indeed; but not kindness such as yours."

Whereupon Philip asked, "Then you will let me, Annie?" She did not answer by word of mouth, but turned, and rose. She fixed her swimming eyes upon him, and let them dwell on his kindly face for a moment. Then calling down a blessing on him, she took up his hand, wrung it passionately, and passed

into the little room beyond. And Philip moved away in great exaltation of spirits.

## VIII

And called him Father Philip. Philip gained  
As Enoch lost.

THE gentle Philip lost no time in putting Annie's children to school. He bought them needful books, and in every way looked after them, like one who does his duty by his own offspring. But he feared the lazy gossip of the port, and valued highly Annie's good name; so he would not venture to go to her house, though nothing else could give him greater pleasure. Yet he sent her gifts by the children, such as garden herbs and fruits, the late and early roses that blossomed on his wall, or conies from the down. Now and then, too, he would send her flour from his tall mill, with the pretext that it was of exceptional quality, wishing thus to avoid seeming charitable.

Whenever, occasionally, and, indeed, quite by accident, Philip met Annie anywhere, he could not fathom the depth of her feelings: for her good heart was too full of gratitude and regard for him to find utterance in any words of thankfulness.

Meanwhile, Philip gave himself up entirely to the children. If they saw him coming, they ran from distant corners of the street, and met his hearty greetings heartily. They lorded it over his house and his mill, filled his patient ears with their petty wrongs or pleasures, hung upon him, played with him, and called him Father Philip.

And it was only natural that they should. To the extent that Philip rose in the love of Enoch's children, Enoch lost. For it was so long ago that he had parted from them; and they were then too young to carry alive and in full, so long, the memory of one whose face and features were to them as faint and hazy as those of a vision or a dream. Indeed he was to them like the vision of a figure seen at early dawn, down at the far end of an avenue, receding farther and farther, no one knew whither. Thus ten years passed since Enoch left his hearth and home and native land; and yet no news of Enoch came.

Now it chanced one evening that Annie's children longed to go with others nutting to the hazelwood, and they wished their mother to go with them. When she had yielded consent, they begged her to let them ask Father Philip too, as

they called him. Then they ran to fetch him, and found him at the mill. He was hard at work as the busy bee, and, like the bee at work in the sweet aroma, covered all over with the white flour dust. And they called to him and cried, "Come with us, Father Philip." He declined; but when the children plucked at him and pressed him hard, he laughed and yielded gladly to their wish. And he was pleased all the more when he learnt that Annie would go with them. And so they went.

But after walking half-way up the ascending meadow, just where the sloping hazelwood began to spread out and cover the hollow ground beyond, poor Annie was exhausted, and said sighing, "Let me rest here." So Philip stayed behind to keep her company, and was well content to bide with her. But the happy children bounded forward with jubilant cries, made a plunge into the whitening hazels, ran down to the bottom, and dispersed, to bend or break the little reluctant boughs, and tear away their tawny clusters, crying to each other and hallooing, here, there, and all about the wood.

## IX

"I am always bound to you, but you are free."  
Then Annie weeping answered, "I am bound."

MEANWHILE, Philip, sitting by her side, forgot her presence. He recalled to his mind that one dark hour there, in that very wood, when he came with thoughts of speaking to Annie of his love, and found himself too late by a brief, but all-too-potent hour. How he was stricken sore like a wounded deer that carried its injuries through life, and stole from the place to live for years a hapless life! Now, at last, he said, lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie, how merry they are, down there in the wood." She turned her face and listened; but she did not utter a word in reply, and he queried anxiously, "Are you tired, Annie?"

But her face had fallen on her hands; and moved beyond himself at the touching sight, he spoke with some vehemence. "The ship was lost, Annie. Think no more of that. Why should you kill yourself and make poor orphans of the dear ones?" But Annie could only say to him, "I thought not of that; but somehow their voices make me feel so lonely."

Then coming somewhat closer to her, Philip spoke, saying, "Annie, there is something that weighs on my mind; and it has done so for ever so long. I know not when first it came. But I cannot keep it to myself any longer. I must speak, and give it utterance. O Annie, it is beyond all hope—indeed, there is no chance whatever that he who left you ten long years ago should still be living. May I make myself bold? May I say this to you, that I grieve to see you poor and wanting help? I might help you; I wish it so much; but I cannot. At any rate, I cannot help you as much as I wish to do, unless indeed you will let me. They say that women are quick to understand. It is so hard for me to speak out my mind to you; but, perhaps, you know what I would have you know. Indeed, Annie, indeed. I wish you to be my wife, and to give me the right and privilege of taking you out of misery and poverty. I will gladly be a father to your children. I do think they love me as they would their own father. And I am sure that I love them even as if they were my own children. It is, I believe, yet possible, indeed it may yet be given to us, to be happy in life—as much as God vouch-safes to His creatures—if only you will be willing

to share your life with me. Think upon it, Annie. Think well before you speak. I am well-to-do; I have no kindred; I am wholly free; I am burdened with no thought or care, save for you and your children. And, O Annie, we have known each other all our lives; and I have, let me confess it now, *loved you longer than you know.*"

Then answered Annie, speaking tenderly, "You have been as God's good angel in our house. God bless you for it, and reward you amply! Can any one love twice, were her lot in life ever so slightly happier than mine? And, O Philip, can you be ever loved as Enoch was? What is it that you ask?"

"I am content," he answered, "I am content to be loved a little less than Enoch." Thereat she cried out as one scared by something terrible:

"O dear Philip, wait for a while. If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come, alas—yet wait a year please; a year is not too long a time to wait. Surely, I shall be wiser in a year. O, wait a little."

And Philip sadly said, "Annie, as I have waited all my life, I will wait a year longer."

Moved by his gentle words, she replied, "Nay, Philip, be not grieved: I bind myself now, you have my promise—in a year. Will you not bide your time for just a year, when I myself

will bide as long?" And Philip answered, "I will bide my time."

There all conversation stopped, and both were silent for a time. At last, Philip looked up and saw the sinking sunlight pass beyond the Danish barrow overhead. Fearing that night might overtake them, and Annie's health suffer from the chill, he rose and called out lustily to the children playing in the wood below. They heard the call and came up laden with the nuts which they had gathered. Then all descended to the port, and there, at Annie's door he paused and gave his hand to her, saying gently, "Annie, when I spoke to you this evening, I failed to see that it was your hour of weakness. I was wrong. Now let me make it right with you. I am always bound to you; but you are free." But Annie weeping answered, "I am bound," and so they parted for that day.

## X

And Annie could have wept for pity of him;  
And yet she held him on delaying.

A YEAR passed, and all too soon for Annie. It seemed to her as if scarcely a moment had passed

since the last autumn. She had been going about her household duties, pondering on his last words, that he had loved her longer than she knew. It seemed as if he had spoken the words but the day before ; and yet, autumn had returned, and there he stood once more before her eyes, claiming her promise.

"Is it a year ?" she asked. He said, "Yes, come out and see if the nuts be ripe again." Poor Annie ! She could not yet make up her mind. She pleaded hard for time. "It is such a great change," she said, "there is so much to look to. Just give me a month more ; I know that I am bound ; but let me have just a month ; I ask no more."

Thus did Annie put off Philip once again ; and he replied gently, "Take your own time, Annie ; take your own time." But as he spoke, his voice shook like a drunkard's hand, betraying a passion that had been kept in check all his life-time.

And Annie saw it all, and felt so much for him, that she could have wept for sheer pity ; but yet, she put him off from time to time, delaying with many an empty excuse, till thus another year had slipped away.

Meanwhile, the idle village-folk began to gossip. They spoke in whispers at gentle Annie.

Apparently they were disappointed in their expectation ; for Philip's visits to her did not end in marriage. That it had not come out of those visits yet, seemed like a personal wrong done to them ; they would not let things be. Some said that Philip merely trifled with her ; some, that she held him off merely to draw him on the more ; others yet laughed at both for being simple creatures that did not know their own minds. But one, in whom all evil thoughts lay combined like the serpent's egg, found delight in hinting at evil in their innocent intimacy.

At home, Annie's son would not say anything to her ; but his wish could be read in his face. Her daughter pressed her more and more to wed the man who was so dear to all of them, and save the house from misery. Add to these, Philip's rosy face began to get furrowed with wrinkles, and grow pale and worn with care. And all these things so combined as to seem a sharp reproach to her that she was too hard on him, herself, and on her children too.

But there was a thing that troubled her mind even more, and made her wait and pause. It was the vague notion that, even after all these long years of separation and the utter absence

of all news, Enoch was still alive, and might yet come back to her. She could not put away the feeling from her mind altogether, in spite of the many things that almost conclusively pointed out to her the utter improbability of it.

## XI

A footstep seemed to fall beside her path.  
She knew not whence ; a whisper on her ear.

AT last one night it chanced that Annie could not sleep ; and she prayed to God for a sign regarding Enoch. Was he yet alive ? Would he ever come back to his own ? Even as she asked of Heaven, "My Enoch, is he gone ?" a boding terror seized her heart. It was heightened all the more by the darkness that enveloped her. She got up hastily and lit the light. Then desperately seizing the Holy Book, she swiftly set it open at random for a sign. Then at once she closed her eyes and let her fingers touch a spot on the open page. And opening her eyes, she read, "*Under a palm tree.*" That meant nothing to her, she thought. Out of the words she could make no meaning that could at all seem a sign to her.

Then she closed the book, and composed herself to sleep. And lo! she saw, in a dream, Enoch sitting above her, on a palm tree, as it seemed. In the dream itself, her mind gave to the vision, like a dream in a dream, that interpretation which seemed to her the most plausible one. "He is gone," she thought, "he is happy; he is singing Hosanna on the highest mountain of the Universe. Yonder shines the Sun of Righteousness; and those are palm trees whereof the happy people cried as they strove, • "Hosanna in the highest."

At this point of her dream she woke up, and at once made up her mind to wed Philip; she would no longer wrong his patience by delay. So she sent for Philip in the morning, and said wildly to him, "There is no reason why we should not wed."

"Then for God's sake, and for the sake of both of us, Annie, if you will wed me, let it be at once," replied Philip.

Thus at last Annie wedded Philip, the church bells ringing merrily. But merrily as the church bells rang, not for a moment did Annie's heart beat merrily all the time. And at home, after marriage, as she moved

about, a foot-step seemed to fall beside her path, but she knew not whence; a whisper fell on her ears; but she knew not what it was. Now she never liked to be left alone at home. Nor would she venture out without a companion; and when she came back home, she often let her hand dwell lingeringly on the latch, before going in.

What ailed her now that she should feel and act so strangely? Philip thought he knew the cause. Such doubts and fears were common to her state, she being then with child! So thought Philip. But then he could not know that other doubts and fears might pursue her; scarcely could she herself realize, much less he, the mysterious influences of unseen events that were passing far away, or were coming to pass nearer home. And yet, when her child was born, Philip seemed but right in what he fancied; for then she felt as if her own life began again in her new-born babe. And now the maternal instinct so filled her heart that those mysterious, instinctive doubts and fears wholly died away. And from that same cause, her good Philip was now her all in all.

## XII

Set in this Eden of all-plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, but ill-content.

AND where was Enoch all the time ? What befell him in the voyage ? Was he alive ? The *Good Fortune*, as the ship in which he sailed was named, made a prosperous voyage, though, after setting out from the Bay of Biscay, she had to weather a rough sea, and was almost overwhelmed. She passed the tropic seas smoothly, and after a long struggle about the Cape of Good Hope, and frequent changes of weather from fair to foul and foul to fair, she entered the tropic seas again on the other side. Now she enjoyed continually a blissful weather, as if sent by a merciful Providence for her especial benefit; thus she passed the golden isles of the Indian Ocean. And, at last, she anchored safely in the Eastern harbour for which she had been bound.

There Enoch traded on his own account, and bought huge and curious toys representing strange creatures for the home market, and gilded dragon for his children. In due time the ship set out on its return voyage. But it was not so lucky

as that from home. At first, indeed, she met with fair weather, and for many days the sailing was smooth and pleasant. Then followed calms which, later, were succeeded by variable winds. These grew more baffling day by day, until at last they broke into a fearful storm, and drove the ship under moonless heavens in the southern seas. And, on a certain day, the cry of "breakers" rose from the devoted crew, followed soon by the inevitable crash, and the wreck and ruin of all but Enoch and two other sailors. These three men clinging fast to broken spars and floating tackle, drifted half the night, and stranded at morning on an island that was rich in vegetation, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

There was no want of man's sustenance there. Nice, large-sized nuts and nourishing fruits were to be had in abundance. Nor was the island deficient in animals. They were in their native wildness; they knew no fear of man, and could be killed for food in any numbers; only one should be devoid of pity for the innocent creatures. The three shipwrecked men chose for their home a mountain gorge facing the sea, and therein built and thatched with leaves a hut that

was partly a hut and partly a natural cave. And the three settled down in this simple abode, surrounded by unending sustenance; there they spent what seemed to them an interminable day, ill-contented with their hapless lot, away from home and kith and kin.

One of the three, scarcely older than a boy, had received injuries when the ship was wrecked; and now he lay lingering between death and life for three years. So long as he lived, no attempt at escape from that lonely island was to be thought of; for the poor sufferer could not in humanity be left alone to die. But after he was gone, the two remaining found a fallen stem; and Enoch's comrade worked ceaselessly at the tree-stem, fashioning it into a boat. He recked not of himself in his eagerness to get through the work. So he was smitten one day with sunstroke, while hollowing the timber with fire after the Indian fashion, and fell dead. And now Enoch was the only one left alive of the three. In those two deaths, he read God's warning, that he should wait and watch, and bide his time.

O! What a life it was for poor, patient Enoch, whose heart was fixed far away in the

distant north, on that sweet native shore of his, where were his hearth and home, and his wife and children, that were dear to him as life itself! The island was full of Nature's pleasing graces. The mountains studded with woods right up to the peaks, the lawns and glades that winded high up the mountain sides as if they led the way to Heaven itself, the big, long and feather-like leaves that hung down atop of the lean, tall cocoanut palms, the gleaming insects and birds of plumage whose variegated colours flashed like lightning in the sunlight, the lustre of the long convolvulus that coiled round the stately stems of trees and spread out to the very edge of the coast, the glittering hues and glorious sights at the horizon that encircled the view all around like a huge belt that girt the world, all these were his to look on, and admire, and enjoy.

## XIII

Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;

BUT what he would be most glad to see,  
what he longed for most like a hungering

man, were a sight of the kindly human face and a sound of the kindly human voice. But these he could not have. What then was it to him that he could hear the endless shriek of the ocean-fowl that wheeled about in the air, the league-long waves that thundered incessantly on the peeping lines of reefs, or the passing whisper of the wind that blew among the trees whose branches shot up high above their heads and blossomed there, or, again, the sound of the little streams that swept down precipices to the sea? Often, all day long, he would sit in the gorge facing seaward which was his present, dreary home, and watch for a passing sail with all the patience of a ship-wrecked sailor.

No sail saw he from day to day! The sunrise breaking upon the view at morn in a myriad shaft-like rays that fell on the palms and ferns and precipices, the glitter of the sun on the endless sea to the east in the fore-part of the day, the dazzling blaze of the sun right up overhead at noontide, and the same glitter again on the sea to the west in the afternoon, these by day, and, in the nights, the great stars that showed themselves as glittering orbs in the depths of the sky above, the ocean-waves whose

endless roar seemed to sound from profounder depths, and then again the scarlet shafts of the rising sun—such were the sights that met the patient Enoch from day to day. But not a sail passed that way for many a weary year.

There, sometimes, he would sit and watch or fancy himself watching; he was so still that the golden lizard passed upon him and even paused awhile, taking his motionless figure apparently, as a lifeless thing of no account. Then he saw in his fancy, as one haunted by fancies and phantoms, strange objects and places, and men and women and children moving about.

Or he would fancy himself moving among people, things and places known, that were far away, in a different clime less bright and sunshiny than where he was; and they, whom he saw and heard in his mental vision, were babes with their babble, Annie, the small house, the climbing street, the tall mill, the leafy lanes, the peacock yew tree and the lonely Hall, the horse he rode, the boat he sold, the chill November dawn and the dark downs covered with the morning dews, the gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves, and the deep and mournful sound of the lead-coloured seas.

And on one such occasion, too, he heard very far away the pealing of his parish bells, that rang in his ears ever so faintly, yet merrily; whereupon he started up with a shudder he knew not why; and when he was recalled to the reality of things, and the beauteous isle that now was his hateful abode came back to his consciousness, he must have surely succumbed to the sense of his utter loneliness, and died; but in that hour of despair, his pure heart sought refuge in Him Who is everywhere and Who lets no one suffer from loneliness that turns to Him for solace.

## XIV

Then, moving off the coast, they landed him  
Even in that harbour whence he sailed before.

THUS many a winter followed summer for Enoch on that lonely isle, turning his hair prematurely grey: But his hopes of seeing, once again, his wife and children and his native shore, and walking among the dear, old and familiar fields, had not yet died in him when, at last, his sad lot on the lonely island came to an end.

Another ship that, like the *Good Fortune*, was blown off its course by contrary winds, and had fallen short of water, stopped near this island, not knowing where she was; the mate of that ship had seen, at early dawn, across a break on this mist-covered isle, the rivulets running quietly down the hills. A boat put out from the ship with a part of her crew and reached the isle; the men landed and scattered themselves on it in search of stream or fountain. The shore was filled with clamour.

Down from his mountain gorge stepped the long-haired, long-bearded victim of solitude, with his sun-burnt face. He looked scarcely like a human being. He muttered and mumbled, and made signs like an idiot, for lack of speech that had deserted him from long disuse; and when they could not make him out, he was filled with rage which, alas, he could not give utterance to. And yet he led the way to where the rivulets of sweet water ran. And as he mingled more and more with the men, and heard them talking, his disabled tongue slowly got back its utterance; and he was able to make them understand what he meant to say to them. When the men had filled their casks

with water, they returned to their ship taking Enoch along with them. And there he told his tale, though yet he could speak but brokenly. They could scarcely credit the wondrous tale of his weary existence on that lonely isle for such a length of time; but by and by, as they grasped the truth more and more, they were amazed and deeply moved by the tale. They gave him clothes and a free passage home. But, often, he worked among the rest and thereby slowly shook off the strangeness that had sat upon him like a nightmare.

The crew of the ship were Englishmen; but not one of them belonged to that part of England where lay the home of Enoch; so they could tell him nothing of those of whom he was so anxious to know so much. The voyage was dull and tedious; there were long delays that seemed ages to the impatient Enoch. The vessel was scarce sea-worthy. But evermore, Enoch's fancy fled before the lazy wind, and back to him. At last, like a lover whose eagerness had time to cool, he breathed the dewy morning air of his native meadow at the close of a cloudy night, with the moon dimly shining in the sky. And the next morning,

the officers and men that belonged to the ship levied a kindly tax upon themselves, and taking pity on the lonely man, paid the money to him. Then moving up the coast, they landed him in that very harbour wherefrom he had sailed away before.

## XV

But finding neither light nor murmur there,  
. . . . . Crept  
Still downward, thinking, "dead, or dead to me."

LANDING there, Enoch spoke no word to any one, but forthwith bent his steps homeward. Home! What home? Had he a home? Where was the home that had been his? He walked homeward! Bright was that afternoon. The sun was shining: but there was a chill in the air. And soon a sea-haze, drawn in by both the harbours that opened out into the sea, enveloped the village; so much so that the road in front seemed cut off beyond a little length, and the eye could see for but a narrow space to right and left. On the almost leafless tree, the robin sang its doleful notes, and through the dripping haze, the dead leaf sank down to

the ground under its own weight. The drizzle grew into rain, and deeper grew the gloom, till at last a great light, dimmed by the thick haze, flared on Enoch as he reached his village.

Then he slowly crept along the long, dark street, full of sad forebodings of coming sorrow. Thus, with his eyes fixed on the stones, he reached the home where Annie had lived and loved him, and the babes had been born, in those seven happy years, so long ago. But finding neither light nor human voice there, but only a bill of sale that gleamed through the haze, he crept still further down the street, fearing and doubting whether they were really dead, or the same as dead to him.

He went down to the cold and narrow wharf, seeking a tavern which he had known in the old, old days. It had borne a crumbling piece of wood for a sign-board that spoke of its great age; and it had been, even in his early days, so propped up, worm-eaten and ruinously old, that now he feared it must have gone. The man that had owned the tavern was dead. But his widow, Miriam Lane, kept up the house, in spite of the daily dwindling profits. It had once been long frequented by brawling sea-men:

but now it was quieter. Still there was ever a bed to be had for a wandering visitor. And there Enoch rested quietly for many days.

Though Enoch was loth to talk, the good dame, Miriam Lane, was fond of talking; for garrulity is a weakness common to old age, the more so to aged women. She would not leave him in peace of mind, but broke in upon him, every now and then, with news and stories, in which his own house and people figured most. But she knew not that she was talking to Enoch himself; for he was so changed in appearance, being now no longer a stalwart, rough sailor, but, to all seeming, an old man with a sun-burnt face, bowed down by misfortune. His baby's death, Annie's growing poverty, the way that Philip put her young ones to school and kept them there, his long wooing, her slow consent and marriage, and the birth of Philip's child, all this was told in full. There was not the slightest change in his countenance. He looked as if absolutely unconcerned in her tale, so much so that one who watched them by would have deemed that he was less affected by the tale than the teller herself. And when she closed her account with the words, "Enoch,

poor man, was cast away and lost," he shook his grey head pathetically, and softly repeated the words to himself, "cast away and lost," and yet, again, deep down in his own heart, so as to be quite inaudible, "lost."

## XVI

The dead man come to life beheld  
His wife, his wife no more, and saw the babe,  
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee.

• YET Enoch yearned to see Annie's face again. "If I might look on her sweet face but once and know that she is happy!" Such was the thought that haunted and harassed him. It drove him forth one day to the hill at evening, when the dull November day was growing into duller twilight. There he sat down gazing on all things below. There a thousand memories passed through his mind, and caused him unutterable sadness. By and by, the ruddy light that shone from the back of Philip's joyous dwelling allured him, even as the beacon fire allures the bird of passage, till it madly flies into it and dies.

Cups and silver vessels sparkled and shone as they stood on a glittering board. A genial

circle was gathered around the hearth. On the right he saw Philip, Annie's disappointed suitor of old times, stout and rosy, with his babe across his knees. From behind, bending down over her second father, was a maiden who seemed Annie's self, but younger and of loftier mein. She was fair-haired and tall, and from her lifted hand dangled a length of ribbon and a ring to tempt the babe. It put out its tiny hands, caught at, and often missed the ring, at which the others burst out into laughter. On the left of the hearth, Enoch saw the mother glancing towards her babe, but turning now and then to speak with her son. He sat beside her, tall and strong, and she was saying, as it seemed, what was pleasing to him; for he smiled at what she said.

Like a dead man come to life by some strange miracle, Enoch beheld his wife who yet was his wife no more, and saw the babe that was hers, and yet not his, upon its father's knees. He saw, too, all the warmth, peace, and happiness that reigned in the happy circle, and his own children, tall and beautiful. And that other, his defeated rival in love, presided over the domestic circle in his own place;

exercising the rights that properly pertained to him, and enjoying the love of the children that were his and yet, alas, not his. The sight was poignant enough to stagger him, and he had to steady himself by catching hold of a branch of a yew tree. He feared that a sharp and bitter cry might escape his lips ; like the blast of doom, it would shatter all the happiness of hearth and home in a moment. if he betrayed his existence to the happy circle within. Indeed he had heard before a full account of all about Philip and Annie and the children. But things seen are mightier far than things heard.

He turned softly like a thief, lest the harsh shingle should grate under his feet. Feeling his way along the garden-wall, in fear he might swoon and tumble and be found, he crept to the gate, opened it gently, and passed out.

## XVII

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore  
Prayer from a living source within the wall.

ONCE out again on the wide, waste-land behind the house, Enoch tried to kneel and pray to God.

But his knees shook, and prone to the ground he fell. But even so, he dug his fingers into the wet earth, and sent forth a fervent prayer.

O ! It is too hard to bear!" he cried. " Why did they take me away from home ? O God Almighty ! Blessed Saviour ! Thou that camest to my succour to keep me alive on that lonely isle through long years of solitude ! Uphold me, Father, a little longer, in my present loneliness. Aid me, God, and give me strength not to tell her, never to let her know, that I am yet alive and come back home. Help me so that I may not break in upon her peace. And O ! My children too ! Must I not speak to them ? But they know me not ; I should betray myself by speaking to them. No ! Never ! No father's kiss can ever be mine. The girl ! How like her mother ! And the boy, O my son !"

The intense anguish of his heart took away the power of thought and speech ; and Nature failed him a little ; and he fell into a swoon. But when he rose, and slowly traced his way back to his solitary home again all down the long and narrow street, he repeated to himself, time and again, and as if he was afraid of the weakness of his own mind, the firm resolve "never to tell her, never to let her know."

And he was now far from being unhappy. His noble resolve bore him up. He had firm faith in God, and prayers daily rose from his heart like a fountain, and kept him a living soul.

Once he said to Miriam, "This miller's wife you told me of, has she no fear that her first husband lives?"

"Ay! Ay! Poor soul!" said Miriam "Fear enough she has. If you could tell her that he is dead, why, that would be her comfort."

Thereupon he said to himself, "After the Lord has called me, she shall know. Meanwhile I await His time."

Henceforth Enoch set himself to work to earn his bread; for he scorned to live by alms. He could turn his hand almost to anything. He was both a cooper and a carpenter, and worked to make the boatmen's fishing-nets, or helped in loading and unloading the tall barks. Thus he could earn a scanty living for himself. Yet as he laboured for himself alone, and worked without any hope of better days in this life, there was no zest in his work. Before a year elapsed, a langour came upon him, which slowly turned into gentle sickness. He weakened gradually till he could work no

more. Then he had to confine himself in the house, and, later in his room, till at last he took to bed. But he bore his sickness cheerfully; for he saw the approach of death and the end of all his misery.

## XVIII

“When you shall see her, tell her that I died  
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her.”

To Enoch the approach of death brought a pleasing hope. It made him think, “After I am gone, she may learn how I loved her to the last.” He called aloud for Miriam Lane and said, “Woman ; I have a secret. Before I tell it you, swear upon the Holy Book that you will not reveal it till I am dead.”

“Dead ?” clamoured the good woman ; “Who would hear of it ? We shall yet bring you round, I assure you.”

“Swear,” added Enoch sternly, “on the Book ;” and on the Book she swore, partly through fear of him. Then Enoch rolled his eyes over her and asked her, “Did you know Enoch Arden of the town ?” “Know him ?” she said, “I knew him long ago. Ay, I remember

how he used to come down the street, how he held his head high, caring for no man."

Slowly and sadly Enoch said to her, "His head is low, and no one cares for him. I think I have not even three days more to live. I am the man!" Thereupon, the woman gave an incredulous cry, "You, are you Arden? Nay, surely he was a foot taller than you."

Enoch said again, "But God has bowed me down to my present stature. My grief and solitude have broken me down. Nevertheless, know that I am he who married Annie Lee. But that name has been twice changed." Then he told her of his voyage, the shipwreck, his lonely life, his coming back, the painful spectacle at Philip's house, his great resolve and the way he kept it. As the woman heard his harrowing tale, tears flowed fast on her cheeks, while, in her heart, rose the eager wish to rush out and run all round the little harbour, proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes. But being bound to him by solemn promise not to reveal his history, she contained herself with great restraint and said to him, "See your children before you die. Let me fetch them, Arden."

Enoch paused a little on hearing her words—it was not easy to get over the temptation. He then replied, "Do not disturb me now at the last. Now, Mirian, mark well my words, and understand me, while yet I have the power to speak. I lay it on you as a sacred duty to tell her, when you shall see her, that I died blessing her, praying for her, and loving her, quite as much as ever I did. Tell my daughter, whom I found to be so like her mother, that my latest breath was spent in blessing her, and praying for her; and tell my son that I died blessing him. Say to Philip that I blessed him too. He never meant us anything other than good. If my children care to see me dead—they hardly knew me while I lived—let them come. For I am their father. But *she* must not come; for my dead face would cause her pain in after-life.

And now there is one of all my blood who will embrace me in the World-to-be. This hair is his. She cut it off his head and gave it me when I parted from her and my babe and children; and I have kept it safe with me all these years, and thought to bear it with me to the grave. But now my mind is changed; for I shall see my babe in bliss. Therefore, when

I am gone, take this and give it to her; for it may comfort her. It will, moreover, be a token to her that I am he."

When he stopped speaking, Miriam Lane promised to do his bidding just as he wished. Once again, he repeated to her succinctly all his instructions, and she promised once again.

## XIX

. . . . . "A sail! A sail!  
I am saved!"

THE third night after this a storm arose making the sea very boisterous. On account of the great uproar, Enoch woke, and rose, and spread out his arms, crying out in a loud voice, "A sail! A sail! I am saved!" With these words dying on his lips, he fell back and spoke no more.

When the strong, heroic soul passed away, he was buried with the costliest funeral the port had ever seen.

# GARETH AND LYNETTE





"Ah! How the tree went down before the force of the fierce torrent!"



# GARETH AND LYNETTE

## I

Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—  
Else, wherefore born ?

IT was spring time. A strong shower of rain was pouring. On the hill-side fronting the great Hall or palace, a torrent was rushing down in cataracts. A tall youth, pale and strong, stood on one of the great terraces of the Hall, looking on the torrent in a calm and reflective mood. He was the youngest of the sons of Lot, king of Lothian and Orkney, and the tallest of them all. He was the pet and darling of his doting mother, Queen Bellicent; and she was loth to part with the chafing youth, who hungered to go out into the world, to do brave deeds, and win renown as a knight of the Round Table.

A tree, apparently weak-rooted, was supplanted and borne away by the swift current. It was

nothing extraordinary, but a common occurrence. In others or in ordinary circumstances, it might have evoked no more emotion or sentiment than a momentary, idle curiosity. But in this tall youth, Gareth, whose head was full of adventures and gallant deeds, the incident of the fallen tree roused a train of characteristic thoughts.

"Ah! How the tree went down before the force of the fierce torrent!" mused Gareth. "It is even thus that I would bring down a false knight or an evil king with my strong lance—if indeed I could yet use my own lance against such foes. Alas! That may not be! The lifeless torrent serves its purpose truly as willed by its Maker and the Maker of all, though it knows it not; but I, who have the sense to know, who have strength and wit, yet linger here in obedience to my mother's will. And she, good soul, keeps me chained to her by her love and coaxing, as if I were still but a child. My nature chafes under this restraint. I would burst away at any moment, but that I am loth to cause her displeasure.

"She is too good to me; I wish she were less so. Then would I break out like a bird escaping from its cage, so that my ambition

may soar higher and yet higher—encompassing the loftiest deeds of glory—like the eagle flying up to its aerie height in ascending circles. And from there would I swoop down and destroy all things that are base, and, as a knight of King Arthur, help him to cleanse the world of evil and achieve the noble purpose of his life."

Thus mused the buoyant youth, and aired his thoughts awhile, catching inspiration from the flowing torrent and the fallen tree. Then he went to his mother, and hovering round her chair, said, "Mother, though you think that I am still but a child, please to tell me now if you love me truly."

She laughed away the question saying, "You are but a wild-goose to doubt my love."

"Then, mother," rejoined the spirited youth, "because you love me, and I am but a goose as you say—only rather tame at that than wild—be pleased to hear a story from your goose-child."

"Very well, my well-beloved child! But let that story of yours be of the goose and her golden eggs," said the doting mother.

Thereupon Gareth began his story, his eyes sparkling with animation; "It shall be so, mother

dear. But this egg of mine, laid by the goose of my story, was of finer gold than goose or eagle can ever lay. For this bird I tell of was a royal bird, whose eggs were laid almost beyond eye-reach, on a palm tree, even such as is beautifully painted in your gilded Book of Hours. Around that palm tree was ever haunting a poor but lusty youth, who often looked at the golden egg aloft, with yearning eyes and itching hands. He thought to himself many a time, ‘If I could climb up the tree and lay my hand upon the egg of gold, I should be wealthier far than a host of kings taken together.’ But, alas, every time the youth reached out his hand to climb, it was arrested by one who loved him from his childhood, and yet caught his hand and stayed him from his purpose, saying: ‘Climb not lest thou breakest thy neck; I bid you by my love not to do it.’ And so the boy neither climbed nor broke his neck, but broke his very heart instead, in pining for the golden egg, and so passed away.”

When Gareth ended his artful tale suggestive of his own condition, his mother felt sorry that he, too, the last of her sons, and the best-beloved, should be so eager to go away from

her, leaving her to lead a lonely life. And she spoke to her son pleadingly. "Have you no pity, my son, that you should seek to leave me a prey to my loneliness? See, there, how your father lies, all but dead beside the hearth. And consider, too, that I have parted with both of your brothers, though indeed they have never been loved with that warmth and love that you have always drawn from me—nor indeed are they worthy of more. They both serve the king; do *you* stay by me. As red berries charm the bird, jousts and wars attract you, my innocent child! But you have never known what it is to suffer from finger-ache! How then could you bear the pang of wrenched or broken limb? Such things, yet, are of but too common occurrence in those brain-stunning shocks and falls in tournaments. My heart dreads at thought of them. Stay, then, my child, by your mother. You can chase the deer by these tall fir trees and rapid streams.

"Even so you may grow in strength day by day and attain manhood. Trust me, you will find the chase such a sweet pastime. And I will choose for you a fair bride such as would be a strength and support to you. She shall do grace to

you as you advance in life, and tend me tenderly in my declining years. Stay, Gareth; stay by your mother; for you are the best of my sons; and, too, remember that you are yet more a boy than a man."

But Gareth, still persevering, said, "As you deem me yet but a child, mother, please to hear yet another story of the child. Once on a time, there was a king, my mother, who was even like our own good King Arthur. The prince that was his son and heir, grew tall and came of age to marry. So he wished for a bride. Thereupon the king set two maidens before him to choose between. One of them was fair to look, and strong withal and fully armed. But she had to be won by the strength and skill of arms. The other was such as no man desired, so unattractive was she. Now, mother mine, the first one was called Fame; and the other—O, need I name her? O my dear mother! How can you think of keeping me always tied to your hearth and home? That would be shame indeed! Now that I have grown to manhood, I must do a man's work. 'Follow the deer,' you say. "Is that work for me? My work lies elsewhere, mother.

Mine is the work to follow the Christ; mine is the task to follow the king, live a pure life, speak the truth whatever it cost, and right the wrongs that harm the world, in obedience to the will of the king. Else, why should I be born?"

Thus did Gareth press home his suit with his mother. And she, carried away by his vehemence, replied, "Sweet son, what you say of the king is true indeed. But do you really wish to give up a life of ease here at home, and risk life, limbs and all for one whose kingship is yet not quite approved. At least, stay yet awhile, till the mystery that hangs about his birth is somewhat cleared. O, stay yet awhile my son?"

But Gareth, whose bounding heart could no longer be restrained, rejoined quickly, "No, my good mother; I cannot stay an hour longer, if I but have your leave to go. I will walk through fire, mother, to gain my object now. I pray you grant me full leave to go and play my part in the world. What? King Arthur not a proven king? Whoever could question it? He who swept away the dust of ruined Rome from off this realm of ours?

He who crushed the idolators and made our nation free? Who else should be deemed worthy of the title of king, if not he who rid the realm of its oppressors, and gave us what is dearer than life itself—Freedom?"

The mother now saw that she had struggled too long in vain to keep her son from his noble purpose, which only grew with the growing days. She realised that in the one purpose on which he had so constantly set his heart and soul, he was not to be shaken. Still she bethought herself of gaining her will by craft and cunning; and she observed, "Will you walk through fire, my son, to gain your end? Well then; let me put you on your trial. Indeed it shall not be so hard as walking on living fire. He who would walk through fire should hardly heed the smoke; and I shall but wish you to walk through mere smoke for a time. Go, then, if you must; but I demand of you only one proof of your love and obedience to me; and you must give it before you ask the king to make you knight.

Conditional as it was, Gareth's heart leaped with joy when at last his mother gave him leave to go. So he readily promised to fulfil

her commands. "Let me but know the proof that you require of me; be it hard, or be it many, I shall not mind, if only I may prove, without a doubt, my love and obedience to you; for that proof will also prove at once to the world the stuff of which your son is made."

Queen Bellicent stated her conditions slowly, in measured accents, pondering on what she said, and looking at her son to watch the effect of her words upon him. "Prince as you are of the noblest rank and the bluest blood, you shall go disguised to Arthur's Hall, and hire yourself to serve among the scullions and kitchen-knaves. And you shall not reveal your name and lineage to any for a year and a day."

In imposing these conditions upon her son, the queen had a motive. She hoped he had too much pride in him to be willing to pass through such a debasing ordeal, even if it were the only way to lead to glory. She fondly believed that he would therefore choose to stay with her, safe at home.

Gareth listened to his mother's words in patience, and was silent for a while, apparently lost in thought. Then he replied with great deliberation. "One may be chained in body, yet free

in soul ; the soul can never be chained against its will. And chained as I shall be to your wish, I shall, at all events, be able to see the jousts, if I go to the king. You are my mother, and obedience is due by right from me to you. I therefore freely yield myself to your will. And so, I will go to King Arthur's Hall disguised, and hire myself, as you command, to serve with scullions and kitchen-knaves. Nor will I tell my name to any—not even to the king—for a year and a day."

But Gareth did not put his resolve to action forthwith. He lingered at home for yet awhile ; for he felt it so hard to give pain to his mother. And she, in her sad fear that he was bent on going, kept by him wheresoever he went, and perplexed his resolve to go. At last, however, one morning, early before dawn, as the darkness was slowly lifting, and a strong wind blew outside, Gareth woke up and, rousing two men that had been his constant attendants from his birth, left the Hall with them, before the watchful mother heard him going.

The three who thus set forth that morn, were dressed like tillers of the soil. And they set their faces southward. Perched on trees or flying about, the birds filled the air with their

melodious cries. The damp hill-slopes showed themselves green against the dawning sky, which presently brightened into variegated colours, while the flowers blossomed into smiling welcome of the rising sun. For it was upon a bright April day that Gareth set forth for King Arthur's Hall.

## II

. . . “We sit king to help the wronged  
Thro' all our realm.”

THE three trudged on and on, till at last they reached the plain that stretched out as far as Camelot. Far off they saw, about the Mount Royal, the mist rising like smoke. As they walked on, now burst on their view the bright city on the hill, and now the spires and towers shot up into view half way down its slope; but now and then the great gate known as “The Gate of Arthur's Wars,” and sometimes, too, as the “Gate of the Three Queens,” was alone visible, overlooking the field below. And now and again the city disappeared altogether from view, till a fresh turn brought one or more of the features of the city into view again.

It all looked so weird and phantom that the two lowly companions of Gareth were amazed. One of them, therefore, cried, "Let us go no further, lord! Here is a city of Enchanters, built by fairy kings." The second companion followed suit. But Gareth, high-born and nobly-bred, laughed at their doubts and fears, saying he had enchantment enough in him to drown old Merlin into the sea. Thus did he drag their unwilling steps up to the city-gate.

Ah! There was not the like of that gate in all the world. It was erected in an arch, and the broad flat slab that served as the keystone thereof was so carved with lines that it looked a veritable wave rippling constantly in its incessant rise and fall. And on that slab stood the figure of the Lady of the Lake, bare-footed, with her arms extended on both sides under the borders of her robe, so that her whole figure was the shape of a Cross; and from her arms and person the robe fell away in dripping wavelets, while drops of water seemed to fall from her arms. Down one of her hands dangled a sword, while the other held a censer or pan for bearing incense.

Gareth and the two that came with him stood staring and gazing at the figure so long that it quite seemed to live and move, and turn and twine, before their wonder-stricken eyes; and they cried out to Gareth, "Lord! The Gateway is alive!"

Presently, the sound of music burst on their ears loudly from the city, which, from its suddenness and strangeness, made the three gazers to start.

After a while, recovering himself from surprise and wonder, Gareth said, "My men, our one lie weighs heavily on our minds even on the very threshold of our enterprise. But whom can we blame for it? I cannot blame myself; nor yet will I blame my mother; that, indeed, will I never do. I must only blame the great love that fills her soul and makes her yearn for me. Well! But I will live to make amends for the enforced lie that I for a while must practise."

Then with his men he went into the city. It was a big city full of stately palaces rising above the streets and overshadowing them; and the buildings were decorated with beautiful designs that symbolised the past, being

the work of ancient kings who excelled in the use of stones for ornamental work.

Gareth passed through the streets of the city to King Arthur's Hall. As he ascended the steps of the Hall, a gracious voice fell on his ears, which was even the voice of the king himself. Presently he stepped into the Hall that stretched in long vaults rising high overhead, and there beheld the splendour of the king enthroned on his high seat over the heads of men, and delivering judgment. He could see no more; for his youthful heart beat within him, as if to deafen his ears with its hammering sound.

And his mind was filled with a great fear. He knew not what to say to the king when he would ask, "What is your name, and what, your lineage?" With such fears on his mind, he pressed on through the court into the Hall. He had other fears, too, to trouble his mind. Of his own brothers, Sir Gawain and Sir Modred, one or the other, or both, might be with the king; and they might discover him through his disguise. But luckily neither of them was present in the Hall, though other tall knights were ranged about the throne. Gareth's eager mind was bent on all

that took place there as if he listened with his eyes. And those eyes shone clear with honour bright like the morning star. One could read in them, as it seemed, an unbounded faith in the great king and an affection untainted by the slightest tinge of baseness or disloyalty. Above all, they shone with the light of victory which was theirs by right of truth and virtue, and of glory gained and yet to gain.

Then came into the Hall a widow crying to the king, "A boon! Sir King! I crave a boon for me. Your father, Uther, wished to purchase, from my lord that is dead, a field that belonged to us. We loved the field so well that we would not part with it for gold. Thereupon he took it from my lord by force, and thus we have lost both the field and the gold."

King Arthur listened in patience to the widow's tale, and then asked of her whether she wished to have the field restored, or gold in payment of its price.

The woman replied with tears flowing from her eyes, "Not the gold, O King! I would rather have our field back again; for it was dear to the eyes of my lord."

Said Arthur then, "Very well; so be it.

Take your pleasant field for yours once more; and, besides, in payment for the use that Uther made of it during all these years, take thrice the gold that he had offered first. It is no boon that I now grant to you. It is bare justice, if what you say be true. Most sinful should it be, if any one sought to enjoy a right out of the wrongs done by his father to others."

And as the widow went out of the Hall with a gladdened heart, there came in another widow crying to him, "A boon! Sir King! I crave a boon at your hands! I am your enemy, O King! You slew my dear lord with your own hand. He was a knight attached to Uther during the Barons' War, when Lot and many another prince rose in revolt, and fought you, because they deemed that you were basely born. And I, too, have held the self-same view; and I hate to ask a boon of you. But yet my husband's brother carried away my son, and kept him in chains in his own castle; and there my son died of cruel starvation. And now this wicked brother has seized the inheritance which you had left to the son after slaying the father. Such is my sad tale; and though I have no right to seek a favour

at your hands, I pray you grant me some knight to do battle for me and kill the foul thief, that so I may be revenged upon him for the loss of my son."

No sooner had the dame concluded her tale than a stout knight strode forward, crying to the king, "A boon! Sir King! I am her kinsman; let mine, I pray, be the pleasure and privilege of righting her wrong; let me slay that cruel man for her."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, crying, "A boon, Sir King! I pray you grant a boon to me. And it is even this, O King, that you do not grant that woman any boon; for she has railed against you and to your face in this very Hall, surrounded as you are by all your august assemblage of knights and men-at-arms. Or, if you needs must grant her a boon, let her be chained and gagged, and that would be good to her and all."

But King Arthur was unmoved by Sir Kay's appeal, and he observed that he sat on the throne for righting wrongs through all his realm. The woman loved her lord, and all that she felt and said by reason of that love was but natural. "And as for you, woman," said the

king addressing her, "may you find peace, though your mind is filled with loves and hates! The kings who ruled before in the land would have doomed you to be burnt at the stake for what you have spoken here now. But I will not do so to you. Get away from here at once, lest the temper of the old kings come down to me. And you, too, O knight, that claim her kindred, go with her, and fight her foe till he is beaten. But do not kill him, but bring him here, so that I may judge the cause between them and do the right in strict justice and truth, as is worthy of a king. Then if he be found guilty, I swear by Jesus Christ that the man shall die."

### III

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage.

LAST of all, Gareth came up leaning on his two attendants, crying, "A boon! Sir King! You can see how weak and hunger-worn I look, even as I lean on these my men. Grant me leave, I pray, to serve for meat and drink in your royal kitchen for a year and a

day. Furthermore, I pray, O King, that you do not seek to know my name the while. This much, however, I may be permitted to say, that thereafter I will fight your battles, and win your grace by doing my devoir right manfully."

And this strange boon of the strange youth the king granted easily, observing, "You are a goodly youth, indeed, and worthy of a better boon than you ask. But since you ask for no better, you shall have even your own desire, and that you may, Sir Kay must take charge of you; for he is the master of the meats and drinks."

The king rose from his high throne and passed. Then Sir Kay, whose sallow face was like a plant bitten at the root by white lichen, remarked regarding Gareth. "Well, now! This fellow has apparently broken away from some Abbey, where, God knows how, he seems to have lacked beef and broth. However that be, if he would work well here, I will stuff him up with food enough to make him shine more smooth and soft than any hog. No pigeon shall cram his crop more than I shall puff up this youth with meat."

Sir Lancelot chanced to be standing near, and, addressing Sir Kay, he said, "Sir Seneschal, hounds and horses you understand well enough

in all their kinds and qualities ; but you do not know men. Brows broad and fair, fine flowing hair, high nose, nostrils large and fine, and hands fine, fair and large, these are things beyond your ken. Sure enough, there is some youthful mystery here. But whether he hails from a shepherd's cottage or from a king's Hall, he is of a noble nature. Of that I am most assured. So treat him, Sir Kay, with all grace ; or he might put you to shame for judging ill of him."

When Lancelot ended speaking, Sir Kay replied saying, "What is it that you say of mystery ? Do you suspect that this fellow will poison the king's dish ? That cannot surely be ; for he spoke too much like a fool. Mystery ! No, no ! I do not believe it at all. And if, as you suggest, the boy were of noble birth, he would have asked for horse and armour. Fair and fine indeed ! Sir Fair-face ! Sir Fine-hands ! What shall we call him ? Well, well ! Sir Lancelot, see to it, I say, that your own fineness does not undo you some fine day. As for this youth, leave him to me. I know what to do with such as he.

Thus it was that Gareth came, of his own

free will, to bear the yoke of menial service meekly in the kitchen of the king, all for the sake of future glory on which his heart was keenly bent. Thus it befell that he ate and slept in the low and unseemly company of the young kitchen lads. But whenever he chanced to meet Sir Lancelot, that noble knight failed not to speak to him pleasantly. Sir Kay, however, never liked the youth, and took pleasure in teasing and vexing him, and taxed him with far more work than should fall to his share as one of the kitchen lads. Much hard work had Gareth to do, therefore, such as turning the broach, drawing water, and hewing wood, and even grosser tasks than these. But Gareth took it all in good part. He never complained or shirked, but did his work with an easy grace that ever ennobled the humblest service. And, all the time, he was never unmindful of the reverence and obedience due to the king, whom, at all times, he sought to serve with the utmost obedience and loyalty.

Often, too, among his companions is service, the talk would turn on the great love that linked the king and Lancelot in inviolate friendship; and they would talk of how the

king had saved the life of Lancelot twice in battle, and Lancelot once the king's, how Lancelot was ever the foremost champion in every tournament, and the king, the mightiest on the battle-field. On such occasions, Gareth would drink in the praises of those great heroes with eagerness and great elation of heart. Or again the tale was told of the finding of Arthur as a naked babe by the wandering forester on the high peak of Mount Caer-Eryri's, far over the blue tarns and hazy seas; and they would repeat the prophecy regarding him, that he could not die, but would only pass in the end to the Island Valley of Avilion, where his wounds would be healed. Then, too, Gareth's heart would be filled with joy by Arthur's praises.

But if ever their talk was foul, he would shut out the words from his ears by taking up a tune and whistling away lustily like a gay lark, or carol some roundelay. And he would wax so loud in doing it that the scullions that started the foul talk used at first to mock at him; but latterly they ceased from mocking and began to show him respect thereat.

Or, again, at times, Gareth would tell some wonderful tale of knights and knightly deeds of valour and skill, and hold spell-bound all his kitchen comrades who lounged or squatted around him in all idleness, until Sir Kay, the seneschal, burst upon the idle group suddenly and scattered them.

Occasionally, too, the men held sports among themselves and competed in trials of strength and skill; and in all of them Gareth always scored over the rest. If it was a contest in throwing a heavy weight, be it bar or stone, Gareth always threw two yards ahead of others. Or if they chanced to have a joust, and Sir Kay granted him leave to go, he would attend it with the greatest eagerness; and when he saw the knights clash their armours in attack like the on-coming and receding wave, or when he saw spear spring from the hand of the thrower, or a good horse reel under the weight of the enemy's onset, young Gareth was carried away by a great ecstasy of delight.

Thus for a month he worked among the menial folk. But in the weeks that followed, the queen, his mother, felt sorry for having bound her son to so hard a trial, and, though her heart

was heavy with the pang of separation from her beloved son, she sent her son armour on the full-moon day, and released him from the binding imposed on him. The message and the arms were brought to Gareth by a squire of Lot. With this squire the youth had used to play at tourney when both were only boys; then they would betake themselves to lonely haunts; and there, after drawing a rough circle to serve as a list, they would dash against each other in mock fight, like veritable knights on the onset.

When the youth learnt from this his early friend, the glad news of his release from his promise to his mother, and the enforced service in the king's kitchen, his young face was suffused with blushes for sheer joy, like that of a maiden whose heart was filled with modest shame. He laughed and jumped and cried in rapture and delight, "Out of the smoke I rise; I leap at once from Satan's feet to Peter's knee. From Hell I rise and fly to Heaven. Such glad news is mine alone to rejoice over! No! It can be none other's; nay, indeed, I am wrong. I forget myself. The news belongs to the king. To him will I hasten now." So cried

the youth in his heart's elation, and seeking the king alone, and finding a fitting opportunity, told him all.

## IV

"Make me thy knight in secret! Let my name  
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest; I spring  
Like flame from ashes."

HAVING told the king of his disguise and the reason of it, Gareth addressed him thus; "I have fought and staggered that great knight of your illustrious order, even him who is no other than my own brother, Sir Gawain; for he drew me to tilt with him for the fun of it, when he was at home with Modred on a visit to my mother. And he owned it himself. That is proof, I think, Sir King, that I can joust. Make me your knight in secret, I pray; and let yet my name be kept unknown, Deign to give me thus the first of the quests that chance may bring to your court; and I will spring like flame from ashes, and do my devoir as becomes a knight of your noble order."

As Gareth delivered his mind thus frankly and freely in his ingenuous ardour, and with a

bounding heart, he caught the eye of the king calmly bent on him. So he stopped at once, and blushed, and bowed low to kiss the royal hand. Thereat the king addressed the youth, and said, "Son, your good mother had appraised me of your coming here, and wished me to grant you your wish. So I have known you all along. But as for my making you a knight, I wonder if you know how my knights are sworn to utter hardihood, perfect gentleness to all, unwavering attachment in love, and implicit obedience to their king."

As soon as the king had said these words, Gareth sprang up from his knees, crying, "My King! Now for mere hardihood, I can only promise you that I shall not lack it. But as for obedience, I refer you to Sir Kay to whose charge you gave me; he is no soft and gentle master; and yet he will tell you how well and truly I have, in all things, given him meek obedience. Lastly, as for love, God knows that yet my heart is whole and knows not love; but by God's good grace, I shall certainly love with a blameless love, if and when it will come to me."

The king was pleased; but yet he said, "How can I make you knight in secret! I must let

Sir Lancelot know; for he is the truest and noblest of all my knights; and he is one with me in everything. He needs must know what all I know."

"If it please you, Sire, let Sir Lancelot know," said Gareth, "for, as you say, O King, he is the noblest and truest of all your knights."

And yet the king demurred, saying, "But why do you wish that men should wonder at you? I would rather wish that you wrought a noble deed for the deed's own sake, for my sake as king, and for the knighthood of my order which, I see, you have so kneely set your heart upon. It is not worthy of one who does his part right manfully, to turn his thoughts to praise."

And Gareth merrily asked, "Have I not, my lord, earned my cake in baking it? Let my name be unknown, I pray, until I make one for myself by my deeds. I am hopeful, indeed, that my deeds will be such as to speak for themselves without the help of a noble lineage. And it is but for a short time that I wish to remain unknown."

So the good king, moved to kindness by the youth's simplicity and candour, placed a hand

on his arm, and smilingly, and yet, as it were, half unwillingly, yielded his consent. Then sending for Sir Lancelot, Arthur told him in private how he had granted Gareth the first quest that should next present itself, and added, "When therefore he claims the quest in my Hall and goes on his maiden enterprise, do you get to horse and follow him at a distance, but cover the lions engraved upon your shield, so that you may remain unknown. And to the best of your might, see that he is neither slain nor taken captive."

That same day there came into the king's Hall a damsel of high lineage, young and beautiful, her face and features betokening her noble birth and a proud nature. She was accompanied by a page, and on entering the Hall, she cried, "O King! It is true, indeed, that you have conquered all your foes that came from beyond your vast domains. But there are foes within, who yet remain unsubdued. There is not a bridge or ford that is not infested now by bandits. Every one that owns a tower, makes himself the lord of half a league around, and grinds all that fall within his power. How can you sit here at ease while these remain to be

conquered yet? If I were in your place, I should not rest, Sir King, till even the most remote and isolated castles were completely free from these cruel men."

"Comfort yourself," said Arthur, "neither I nor my followers indulge in rest. If my knights keep the vows they swore, even the remotest waste and moorland of the realm shall soon be safe as the centre of this Hall. But what is your name? Tell us what you seek at our hands."

"My name," said she, "is Lynette; and I am of noble birth. And as for my present need, I ask for a knight to combat in behalf of my sister Lyonors, who is likewise a lady of high lineage, and mistress of extensive lands; and she is beautiful far more than myself. She lives in Castle Perilous. A river runs in three loops round her castle. Three bridges span the river at three places, and lead into the castle; and these are guarded by three knights, who are brothers, while a fourth, who is the mightiest of the four, holds my sister a prisoner in her own castle. He has thus laid siege to her, because he seeks to make her wed him against her will. He would have pressed home the siege, but that he waits for you to send

Sir Lancelot to do combat with him in her behalf. He hopes to overthrow that first and best of knights, and then to wed the lady. But she would not wed any other than the one whom she loved, and if that may not be, she would embrace a holy life and die a virgin. Therefore have I now come for Sir Lancelot."

The maiden ended. And Arthur, mindful of Sir Gareth (for he had been dubbed a knight in secret by the king), asked, "Damsel, you know that this order of our knights lives only to crush the wrong-doers of the realm. But tell us who these four may be of whom you speak. What manner of men are they?"

And the damsels replied, "Of a foolish sort are they, O King! They belong to the old knight-errantry, and ride abroad and do but what they will. They are courteous or bestial according as it suits them and the moment. They recognise neither law nor king. And they have taken fantastic names to themselves. Three of them, steeped as they are in folly, call themselves the Day, which is to say, the Morning-Star, the Noon-Day-Sun and the Evening-Star. Nor is the fourth any whit the wiser, but rides armed all in

black. His huge figure is an odd mixture of man and beast of boundless savagery; and he has named himself the night, or, more often, Death. He wears, to match, a helmet mounted with a skull, and bears a skeleton figured on his arms. He means to show by these that if any should slay or subdue the other three, he shall be slain by the fourth and sent into endless night, which is but another name for death. And all three, O King, are fools, but mighty in their strength. Therefore have I come for Sir Lancelot."

The maiden spoke and ended. Then up rose young Gareth in his seat, a head taller than all the others in the Hall; and, with kindling eyes, cried out, "A boon! Sir King, this quest!" And observing that Sir Kay was raising his voice like a wounded bull, the youth addressed the king again, saying, "I serve in your royal kitchen, Sire, and have grown mighty with your liberal meats and drinks; and I can bring down a hundred such as these four wicked men. I claim your promise, Sire."

The king looked with knit brows upon the comely youth for just a moment; but presently getting the better of his anxious thoughts, he

said to Gareth, "A rough and hasty youth! But, then, these are qualities pardonable in a worthy knight, and you are one. Go, therefore."

All were amazed to hear the words of the king; but, most of all, the maiden felt the sting of shame and pride and wrath beyond control. Her clear complexion turned ruddy all at once, and, lifting both her arms, she cried in bitterness and anger, "Fie on thee, Sir King; I asked for your chief knight, and you have given me your kitchen-knave." And before any one in the Hall could stop her, she turned and fled down the lane that led out of Arthur's Court. Coming out, she took horse forthwith, and descending the sloping street, passed the weird white gate, and paused beside the field where were held the tournaments of the king, murmuring to herself in dire contempt, "a kitchen-knave!"

## V

"Have at thee, then," said Kay: they shocked, and Kay Fell shoulder-split, and Gareth cried again,  
"Lead, and I follow," and fast away she fled.

By the main doorway the king passed out from the Hall, after the court was over. Through

the other opening opposite the hearth, the maiden had fled in her wrath, and on to this Gareth walked, and passed out beyond. There he saw King Arthur's gift, a war-horse of the noblest breed, and worth not less than half a town. Beside it stood the two men that had come with him from his home in the north. One of them carried a fresh shield bearing no arms on it, as befitted a maiden knight, and a helmet as fresh, while the other held, by one hand the horse, and by the other a spear.

On seeing that his men waited in readiness with horse and accoutrements for himself, young Gareth doffed from his body the loose and flowing garment that covered him from neck to foot; and now he shone in all his youthful splendour, like the fire that had been covered with ashes since removed, and had seemed nearly dead, or like those dull-coated insects that had just shed their coat and set off on their first flights with glowing wings of wondrous hues. Gareth put on the helmet, and taking the shield, mounted horse, and grasped a spear, made of the toughest wood of a weather-worn tree and tipped with pointed steel. And at sight of the noble figure, people came

and pressed around him. So did the kitchen-knaves, who now came out in a throng; for they saw that the knight that was mounted and armed was none other than he who had worked with them lustier than all, and whom they could not help but love. In sheer joy they threw up their caps and cried aloud, "God bless the king, and all his fellowship." Thus did Gareth ride out through lanes of people shouting down the sloping street, and issued out of the wondrous gate.

As Gareth passed out with joy, Sir Kay was standing beside the door. Now, when an angry cur has been snatched away from doing battle with an opponent cur before its rage had spent itself by fighting to the bitter end, it follows its so-called owner, sore against its will and growling in suppressed rage and mortification at being prevented from inflicting hearty injuries on the foe. Even so was it with Sir Kay; for he had used to tease and harry Gareth; but now that the youth got beyond his power, he vented his discontented wrath in words of scorn, which he cast at the youth, as he passed out of the door.

"Bound on a quest are you, my scullion-

knave, with horse and arms ? The king, it seems, has outlived his days of pride and glory, though yet in the prime of his life.” Thus spoke Sir Kay, and presently turning to the scullions that had met there to see their erstwhile comrade off, he howled to them, “ Be off, you salves, to your work again, if you fear to kindle the fire of my wrath. Can the sun rise in the west and set in the east ? Perhaps this fellow had received a head-blow which he has somehow outlived ; that has turned his wits with an overweening pride that still holds his mind. Is the fellow crazed ? How the villain lifted up his voice and cried out in the king’s Hall, without taking shame to call himself a kitchen-knave ! But he was tame and meek enough with me, till Sir Lancelot began to take notice of him and infused conceit into his puffed-up heart. I will ride after this loud-tongued knave, and see whether he still owns me for his master. Out of the kitchen-smoke he came, for that is his proper place ; and if my lance does not fail me, I will cast him into the mire : and the king, if he gets out of his preset craze, may, if he choose, send the fellow back to the kitchen.”

But Lancelot stopped the seneschal and said, “ Wherfore will you act against the king’s

commands, Sir Kay? The youth never gave you cause to take offence. He was never proud of bearing. He had no conceit of any kind; but he always served you well and thereby served the king. Desist from folly. Take my advice. For this lad is great and lusty, and he is well acquainted both with lance and sword."

But Sir Kay was obstinate, and would not take a good word in proper season. And so he said to Lancelot in reply, "Fie, tell me not of any greatness in the youth. You are overfine, and you will only spoil stout knaves with your foolish courtesies."

With that Sir Kay mounted his horse and rode down the sloping city and passed out of the gate, while the men gazed in silence upon his foolish race.

Meanwhile, Lynette lingered by the field of tournaments muttering to herself, "Wherefore did the king scorn me? Even if Lancelot could not be spared, the king could have granted to me any of the other noble knights who tilt for lady's love and glory rare. But O! Fie upon him! That he should send a kitchen-knave to do my high behest!"

As she was thus musing and muttering to herself there, Sir Gareth approached her, glittering in armour, and there could scarcely be a youth so handsome as he. To the maiden he said, "Damsel, this quest is mine. Lead and I follow." But she averted her face from him, and closing her nostrils with her fingers in mock-seriousness, cried out in a shrill voice, "Hence, away; approach me not! You smell of kitchen grease." Presently seeing that Sir Kay was coming on in rage behind Gareth, she added, "Look who comes behind;" and Sir Kay called to the youth saying, "Do you not know me? I am your master; I am Sir Kay. You are wanted, lad, in the king's kitchen."

Turning sharply round on Sir Kay, the youth rejoined, "Seek not any more to play the master with me. As for my knowing who you are, that I certainly do; for I know that you are the most ungentle knight in the king's palace."

Irritated beyond himself by the words of the youth, Sir Kay rushed upon him crying, "Have at thee!" They met like a shock, and presently Sir Kay fell with his shoulder split; and young Gareth cried again to Lynette, "Lead and I

follow." But she said not a word to him, but rode away at a furious speed. Nor did she slacken a bit until the heart of her good horse was nearly bursting with the violence of its beating, and was forced to stop.

Scarcely had she stopped when she was overtaken by Gareth, to whom she turned and said, "Why do you seek to accompany me? Do you think that I will accept you any the more as a champion, or love you the better, because, by some device quite cowardly, as I make no doubt, or by some unhappy accident, you have overthrown and slain your master? What? You, the dish-washer and broach-turner, to hope to serve as a lady's champion! Not you! You smell too much of the kitchen to me."

"Damsel," said Sir Gareth gently, "Say what you will. It shall not deter me from my duty. I leave not till I achieve this fair quest, or die in the endeavour."

"You will achieve the quest, will you?" said the maiden scoffing at the youth. "How like a noble knight you talk! You have, methinks, caught the proper manner of a true knight by listening; and the rogue that you are, now you ape it here for me. But beware,

O, knave ! You will meet those presently whom you will not dare to look in the face for all your kitchen-learnt skill."

But Gareth said with a pleasant smile, "I will, however, make the attempt." She was so maddened by that smile, that she darted forward once again down the avenues of a boundless wood. But Gareth followed fast, and overtaking her, came up for another spell of scurrilous abuse.

"Sir kitchen-knave," said she, "I have missed the only road by which Arthur's men ride out along the wood. The wood is hereabout nearly as full of thieves as the leaves on the trees. Can you use that spit of yours which you vaunt as your sword ? Then fight the thieves, if you can ; for there is no escaping the thieves that infest this wood."

## VI

"Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the king's son."

THUS the two rode on together, the reviler and the reviled, till evening came, and, later,

darkness set in. Then, after labouring up one long ascent, they saw, through the tops of thousands of pine trees, a hollow dotted with dark spaces and extending towards the west till it was lost to view. And in the depth of that hollow glittered a mere, round as the red eye of the eagle-owl, with the last rays of the parting sun playing upon it. Presently shouts reached the ears of the two riders, followed shortly by a serving man, who came flying from out of the dark wood, and crying to the youth, "They have bound fast my lord, and they intend to cast him into the mere."

And Gareth said to Lynette, "I am bound to right the wronged, but now my greater duty is to bide with you and keep you from harm." But the damsel spoke contemptuously, repeating to him his own words in mockery, "Lead, and I follow."

Stung to the quick, Gareth cried, "Follow, I lead," and so, down among the pines he plunged, and there he saw the dark figures of six tall men dargging a seventh man mid-thigh deep into the mere, through a rank growth of reeds and rushes. A stone was tied to the neck of the seventh man, so

that he might sink the more easily by its weight. Gareth rushed forward and smote lustily, quieting three of them, while the other three fled through the pine trees. Then forthwith Gareth loosened the stone at the neck of the poor victim of the villains, and eased him of the encumbering weight. When the stone fell into the mere, being cast by Gareth, the water bubbled up thick as oil. Lastly, Gareth loosened the bonds that bound the poor man's body, and, lo, there stood before him, in his recovered freedom, a stout Baron who was King Arthur's friend.

And he addressed the lusty youth and said, "It was well that you came in such good time. Else had the cruel thieves wreaked their vengeance upon me to their hearts' content. And they have good cause to hate me; for it has always been my wont, when I caught one of them, to drown him as a mere vermin into this mere with a stone about his neck. There are a many of them here so drowned by me, whose bodies rot under this pale sheet of water. And these would get free of the stones after some time, and rise up to the surface, and dance at night in a gruesome light. Well, now! You have saved

one who has been of some service in cleansing this wood of these thieves; and I would be glad to reward you worthily in grateful requital of your valorous and timely succour. Name me your reward, I pray."

But Gareth firmly replied, "I need no reward. The deed that I have done has been done for its own sake. And, besides, it is only my duty that I have done, in strict obedience to the king. But will you grant this damsel shelter for the night?"

Thereupon, the Baron said to Gareth, "I will believe that you are of Arthur's gallant heroes." Thereat a light laugh burst from Lynette, who remarked, "Yes, truly, and, in a manner, a knight of Arthur's band; for he is a kitchen-knave, and lately of the king's Hall." Then turning to Gareth she said, "Deem not, O scullion, that I accept you any the more as a worthy champion, because you ran down sharply with your sword on a few cowardly men of the wood. A thresher of the corn-field could have scattered them with his flail. And you smell of the kitchen still. However, if this Lord will grant me shelter for the night, it will be well indeed."

The Baron's castle stood a league beyond the wood surrounded by rich and extensive grounds; and the knight and the maiden found hospitable welcome there that night. That same day, there had been a big feast in the lofty hall of the castle, and the table groaned under the weight of the rich viands left of the feast untasted. And now, in grateful welcome of the guests, the Baron placed before the lady a peacock dressed in his gay and joyous plumage. And by the host's directions Gareth found his seat by the side of Lynette. But as soon as he took his seat by her, up rose the maiden, saying, "Here is much courtesy shown, I think, Lord Baron, in setting this kitchen-knave by my side. Hear me, for I will tell you my tale. This morning, I betook myself to King Arthur's Hall and prayed to the king to grant me Lancelot to fight the brotherhood of Day and Night; for the last mentioned one is a veritable monster that can be subdued by none other than that first and best of knights. Scarcely did the words leave my lips, when, lo, this shameless kitchen-knave uprose and shouted to the king, 'The quest is mine. Your kitchen-knave am I, and mighty through your

meats and drinks.' The king all at once went mad and said, 'Go therefore,' and he gave this quest of mine to this knave. He is more fit to stick swine than ride abroad redressing woman's wrong, or sit beside a high-born lady of my rank and state."

Thereat the Baron, stricken with shame and wonder, now looked at the one and now at the other. Then he left the damsel by the peacock decked in his plumage, and seating Gareth at another board, sat down beside him and then began :

"I know not, friend, whether or not you are kitchen-knave, or whether it be the maiden's fancy that you are one. Nor do I care to know whether she be mad, or else the king, or both or neither; or, indeed, whether you are yourself mad. But this much I saw and I know it well : you strike with might ; you are strong and of graceful mein, and, what is more than all to me, you have saved my life. Therefore consider whether you will not stay with me, rather than go back with the maiden to crave the king to send Sir Lancelot on her behest. Pardon me for speaking so, and, believe me, truly I speak for your good."

"I beg you, pardon me, my lord!" said Gareth. "But I will follow up the quest. I fear not Day and Night, nor Death and Hell."

So, the next morning, escorted by the host for some distance, and receiving his grateful blessings, the maiden and the youth parted company from him, and Gareth said to her again as before, "Lead, and I follow."

And now she replied with all her hauteur, "I shall not fly any more from you. I grant you an hour's time; for the lion has abided with the weasel for lack of better company on the island-ground in time of flood. Nay, besides, I owe you some consideration too. Go back, you fool. For hard by is one who is so mighty that, were you to meet him, you are certain to be overthrown and slain on the spot. If you will take my advice and get back to your place, I would go to the king again, and shame him for granting as my champion one from the ashes of his hearth.

No words can smite more poignantly than these; but Gareth was made of that true spirit of noble daring and chivalrous grace that never allows itself to be the least ungentle to ladies in word or manner, even under the

greatest provocation. So now he answered her full courteously, "You may say what you will; it shall not hinder me from doing my duty. Allow me my hour, and you will find that my fortunes are as fair as those of the maid of the fables who lay among the ashes, but wedded, at last, the son of the king."

And the pair rode on till they reached the bank of a river at one of its bends, through which it coiled like a serpent. The banks were steep and covered with rough thickets; and the stream itself, at that place, was full and narrow. A small bridge ran across the stream over a single arch; and on the opposite side stood a silk pavilion, looking gay with streaks of gold that were drawn by the golden rays of the glorious sun. All was of the colour of the spring daffodil except the dome, which was purple, and the crimson-coloured little banner that waved above. In front of this pavilion paced the lawless warrior all unarmed. He, on seeing the riders approach, called out to Lynette saying, "Damsel, is that the champion you have brought from Arthur's Hall?"

"Nay, nay," she said, "Sir Morning Star! The king holds you in such utter scorn

that he has sent his kitchen-knave to put you down. And, I warn you, look to yourself. Take care that he does not fall on you suddenly and slay you unarmed. He is no knight, but a mere knave."

## VII

"O star, my morning dream hath proven true,  
Smile sweetly, thou! My love hath smiled on me."

THUS warned, the warrior called out, "O Daughters of the Dawn, and servants of the Morning Star! Approach and bring my arms." And at his call, three fair girls in gilt and rosy raiment issued out of the silken curtain-folds, bare-headed and bare-footed. Their feet glistened in the dewy grass that grew on the ground, while their hairs shone with dew drops or with gems that sparkled brightly. These armed him in blue arms, and gave a shield that was also blue; and on the shield was the Morning Star drawn in lines.

Gareth gazed in silence upon the knight, who stood for a moment waiting for his horse, and displaying his person in sheer vanity. As the two stood facing each other thus with the

narrow stream between them, the gay pavilion, the naked feet of the three girls, their rosy raiments, and the Star, were all reflected in its depth, and mingling with the reflection of the azure sky, waved at bottom in gentle motion.

Seeing how Gareth stood staring silently upon the foe, the maiden scoffed at him and said, "Why do you stare thus on the foe? I see you shake with fear. But there is yet time for you to save your skin. Take to your heels and run down the valley at your best before he gets to horse. No one will cry shame on you; for you are no knight, but a knave of the kitchen."

Said Gareth, yet speaking gently as ever, "Whether I am knave or knight, O Damsel, I would far more gladly fight a score of times than hear you judge and speak so ill of me. Fair words are best for him, indeed, who fights for you; for they would please him most. But truly, foul words are even better; for they put the sting in him and goad him to do his best: nay, he draws fresh strength from the very wrath that they rouse in him. So am I sure that I shall overthrow this foe."

That foe, with his glittering Star, when he had mounted on his horse, cried out from across the

bridge, "A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me! But I fight not such; yet will I return scorn for scorn. Indeed it would be a shame that I should do him further wrong than to set him on his feet, take his horse and arms, and so return him to the king that sent him hither. Thou knave, come, leave yonder lady with a light heart. Keep away from her. It is rot seemly that a knave should ride with such as she."

"Dog, thou liest. I spring from a loftier lineage than thine own," snorted Gareth; and scarcely did the words leave his mouth when the two warriors met in the middle of the bridge in a deadly shock. The spears of both bent in their hands with the fierce thrusts they aimed, but did not break. So fierce was the onset that each was hurled back from his horse as a stone from out of a catapult; and both fell, as if dead, beyond their horses' crupper. They met again and fought, the damsel crying "Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!" At last Gareth's shield was broken, but one stroke from his strong arm laid the foe grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fallen man, "Take not my life; I yield," whereon, Gareth proudly said, "If

this lady ask it of me, I will accord it freely as a grace."

But the maiden took the graceful words of Gareth as an insult, and said, her face reddening with pride and anger, "Insolent scullion! *I* to ask of *you*? Shall I be bound to you for a favour of grace? If that man's life depends on my asking it of you, I say, 'let him die; I care not.'"

At once Gareth proceeded to unlace the helmet of the fallen foe; but she cried, "Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay one nobler than yourself." He stopped and said, "Damsel, your least wishes are ever my commands. And your life, O knight, is yours, because the lady is pleased to save it. Get up, and quickly go to King Arthur's Hall, and say his kitchen-knave has sent you to him. Mark you how you crave his pardon for the many laws that you have broken. And I, when I return, will plead with him for your life. Your shield is mine by the fortunes of our combat. Adieu." Then turning to Lynette, he said coolly, "Lead, and I follow." And fast she fled away.

When Gareth pursued and came up to her, she said rather less scornfully, "It seemed

to me, O kitchen-knave, that when I watched you striking the foe on the bridge, the savour of the kitchen came a little fainter from you than before. But the wind has changed, and I scent the savour now twenty-fold. Be gone, O Scullion! Take my advice; for hard by this place is one that guards a ford, the second brother in the fools' parable which the four enact, who will give you your deserts and more. Care not for shame; for no shame can attach to one who is no knight; but a mere knave."

And Gareth answered, "Ay, you speak of a parable. So hear a parable of the knave. When I was kitchen-knave among the rest, fierce was the hearth, and one of my mates owned a rough dog. One day he cast his coat to the dog and said, "Guard it," and none could tease it off its trust. You are even such a coat, and I the dog; and it was the king that gave you to me to watch. So you can worry me as you will; but you cannot get me off by any means. One that does you service truly and well, I trust, is in every way fitted to render the service of freeing your sister, Lady Lyonors, from these wicked men, as much, as any knight."

"Ay, Sir Knave," said Lynette, "and I call you, Sir,' because, being but a knave, you strike your foe like a worthy knight. I hate you all the more for your knightly conduct."

And young Gareth said, "O Damsel, should not my services be valued the more for my overthrowing your enemies, being, as I am, a mere knave, as you would say?"

"Well, well," she said, "but you will meet your match."

## VIII

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,  
O dewy flowers that close when the day is done,  
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

AND they rode on side by side, the reviler and the reviled, until they reached a second bend of the river; and there they saw beyond a shallow part of it that raged in a torrent, the Noon-Day Sun riding a huge red horse, and clad from head to foot in burnished mail that shone like transparent glass. His fierce shield flashed like a veritable Sun with his myriad rays. So dazzling was the lustre of the shield that when, after gazing upon it, Gareth

turned his eyes, they lost the power of clear vision, and all objects looked blurred and hazy. The warrior shouted from the other side of the hollow stream, "What do you do, brother, in my marches here?" And Lynette took it on her to answer back across the stream in her shrillest voice, "Here is a kitchen-knave from King Arthur's Hall, who has already overthrown your brother, and is carrying his arms as trophies." Thereat the warrior snorted contempt, and spurred his horse into the foaming stream; but his face worked itself up into a red round shape that reflected perfect foolishness.

Sir Gareth met him mid-stream; and for lack of room for the use of lance or the display of any great skill in arms, they exchanged but four strokes with their good swords; but the strokes were mighty, and Gareth feared that he might come to shame and harm; but as the Sun lifted up his huge arm to strike the fifth blow, the hoof of his horse slipped in the stream, and the stream, on its downward course, carried away both horse and man.

Then Gareth put out his lance across the ford and drew up the foe; and as his

bones were too badly battered on a rock, he declined to fight any more, and yielded. Him also Gareth sent to the king, adding, "Myself, when I return, will plead for you." Then turning to Lynette he repeated, "Lead, damsel, and I follow."

Now, strangely enough, she led him on without uttering a word of scorn; and he asked her gently, "Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?" "Nay, not a point," was her strange reply; and yet she added; "Nor are you victor here. There lies a ridge of slate across the ford. His horse stumbled thereon, and I saw it too." And they went on in silence.

Presently she turned to him and said, "But look there; yonder is the third fool of the allegory."

And there, beyond a bridge that took three bends, the knight that named himself the Star of Evening stood, all naked as it seemed, and glittering in the roseate hue of the sinking Sun; and his figure was reflected brightly in the depth of the stream as it flowed on its downward course.

One seeing the figure in its seeming nudity, Sir Gareth wondered why the mad man stood

thus shamelessly in open daylight. And the maiden replied, "Nay, he is not nude, but only wrapped in hardened skins that fit him like his own. The virtue of these skins close to his body is that even if you cleave his armour, the sword will be turned aside by them."

This was the third of the brothers that guarded the three entrances to Castle Perilous. And he shouted from his side of the bridge to Gareth saying, "O Brother Star, why do you shine here so low? Your ward is higher up; but have you slain the damsel's champion?" Evidently, this foe mistook the youth for the brother who was set to watch at the second bridge.

•But the maiden put him to rights by saying loudly, "This is no star of your brotherhood, but one that had been shot from Arthur's sky to bring disaster to yours and you. For know that both of your brothers have gone down before this youth; and so will you; for you are old, are you not?"

And the stout warrier replied, "Old am I, damsel, but hard to boot. I am old indeed; but I possess the might of twenty boys."

Young Gareth improved upon him by rejoining, "Old are you, and over-bold in bragging of your powers. But that same strength that overthrew the Morning Star can surely throw down the Evening Star, I vouch."

Then that other blew a hard and deadly note upon the horn, calling out, "Approach and arm me." From out an old, storm-beaten, russet-hued and many-stained pavilion issued forth, with measured steps, a grizzled damsel. And she armed him in his old armour, and brought him a helmet which had for its crest but a drying evergreen. Then she gave him his shield whereon his emblem, the Star of Even, shone half-tarnished and half-bright. And when his horse was brought to him, he jumped on its back and rushed to the attack. So they met on the bridge hurling themselves against each other in fierce onslaught. And Gareth threw down the foe and, alighting promptly, drew out the sword and set on him without a moment's loss. And though the foe was quite prepared with drawn sword, Gareth brought him down groveling on his knees. But the foe vaulted up and came on again to the attack. Gareth panted hard, and his great heart was troubled with the

fear that all his labour might, in the end, avail him nothing.

He seemed to strike with no effect whatever; but all the while the damsel clamoured, "Well done, Knave-knight; well struck, O good Knight-knave—O Knave, as noble as any of all the knights—shame me not, O shame me not. I have prophesied—strike; you are worthy of the Table Round; your foe is old; his arms are weak; he trusts to the hardened skins; strike, strike; the wind will never change again."

Thus did Lynette cheer Gareth now and spur him on to renewed vigour. And he, hearing her words of cheer, smote stronger and ever more strongly, and hewed great pieces of armour from off the body of the foe; but he lashed in vain against the hardened skins, and he could not throw him down altogether, any more than the South-Western gale, that blows uninterruptedly in powerful gusts, is able to press down the buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs for ever unsubdued.

At last, however, young Gareth's sword clashed with the sword of the sturdy foe and broke it down to the hilt, and he cried out forth-

with, "I have you now." But forth sprang the foe, and all unknightlike, writhed and wound his wiry arms around young Gareth's body, and tried to squeeze the life-blood out of him. But though Gareth felt near being strangled in spite of his coat of mail, he strained himself to the uttermost, and extricating himself from the deadly grasp of the warrior, caught him up and hurled him bodily over the bridge into the foaming river; and leaving him there to sink or swim, he cried to the maiden, "Lead, and I follow."

But now the damsel said, "I lead no longer. I will have you ride by my side; for you are the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves."

Now at last Lynette fell into such a repentant mood that she turned to the youthful hero, and owned herself at fault, saying, "Sir—and in good faith I would gladly have added 'Knight' but that I heard you call yourself a knave—I am ashamed that I so rebuked and reviled you, and said of you things that are false and unmerited. I am of noble birth, and I thought the king had scorned me and my proud name and race, when he gave you to me as my champion. And now, I pray, pardon it all, and

let me henceforth call you friend. For you have answered all my taunts and scornful words with unwearying courtesy and gentleness. And I know, you are fully bold and meek withal, indeed as bold and meek as any of Arthur's noblest knights. But I must say this, yet, that I am lost in amazement to think that you are a knave. It is a marvel to me, indeed, that passes my comprehension altogether."

As gentle and meek as ever, Sir Gareth spoke to the maiden saying, "Damsel, you are not all to blame in this. Only, if I may presume to say as much, you were wrong to think that the king would hold in scorn such as you, or that, when you asked for a champion, he would grant you one not fit to cope with your quest. You said your say; and I answered with my deed. And let me tell you verily what I believe is the true test of a knight. He who lets his heart to be stirred to foolish anger by any gentle damsels waywardness, and thus renders himself unfit to fight her cause, is no true knight at all, but a mere half-man, half-brute.

"Talk not of shame, gentle damsels! Have no thought of what you said to me. It was your foul words that fought for me. And now

that your words are fair, I feel so proud and confident in my own powers, that it seems to me as if no knight has force enough in him to quell me—nay, not even Sir Lancelot, that first and best of knights.”

## IX

“And thou hast wreaked his justice on his foes,  
And, when reviled, hast answered graciously.”

Now the twilight drew to dusk. It was the hour when the heron, having perched itself all day on leg, as if in melancholy, takes its flight to the distant pool in search of prey. Then turned the noble damsel smiling to the youthful knight, and told him of a cavern close at hand, where meat and drink awaited him, sent thither by Lady Lyonors for the use of the awaited champion.

Presently, they came to a narrow cavern on the sloping side of a hill. Therein were slabs of rock inscribed with figures representing knights on horseback; and they were painted in colours that were slowly wearing off. When the pair had arrived there, the maiden turned to the youth saying, “Sir Knave, my Knight! Once on

a time here lived a hermit. His holy hand has fashioned on the rock the War of Time against the Soul of Man. And those four fools yonder have caught their allegory from these damp walls. But they took up the form alone and wholly missed its real spirit." Gareth looked, and read the inscriptions on the rocks. But presently the maiden called his attention behind and said in haste, "Now, look yonder, and see who comes on you."

Gareth turned his face and looked, and, sure enough, he saw a tall knight on a noble charger advancing towards them. From the gleam on the shield now held by Gareth, the tall knight took him for one of the foes who had overthrown the youth. For it was Sir Lancelot himself, who followed the pair in obedience to the king's commands; but he had been delayed, partly because he had had to help back Sir Kay into the king's palace after his fall by the hand of Gareth; and he was further delayed, because the maiden, in her headlong error, had lost her way in the wood, and Sir Lancelot had, in consequence, missed her and her pursuing champion. He had made, however, what speed he could, swimming the river-

loops; and now at last he came upon them at the cave, and softly drew behind them; but the maiden had espied him and warned Gareth of his approach. But neither she nor her companion knew that it was Sir Lancelot, because he had fully covered his blue shield-lions.

Now Sir Gareth pricked himself to a rage at the new-comer's cry, and, catching it up, fell to on the spur of the moment. But when they closed, it was but a moment's work; for at one touch of that skilled spear, the wonder of the world, the young knight went down so easily, that when he grasped the grass within his hands, he laughed. The laughter jarred upon Lynette, and she asked him harshly, "Shamed and overthrown, and tumbled back into the kitchen-knave, why do you laugh? Do you laugh because you blew your blast in vain?"

And Gareth replied with that grace which comes so naturally to a brave youth of noble birth. He was ready to give credit where it was due, with the same hearty frankness with which he would take it to himself when it was his. But he spoke in a vein of pleasant humour in acknowledging his defeat, saying, "Not so, noble damsel! I only laughed to

think that I, the son of Lot and Bellicent, victor of the bridges and the ford, and knight of King Arthur's Round Table, here lie thrown by one whom I know not yet, all through unhappiness, device or sorcery." Then apostrophising his sword, he cried gaily, "Out, Sword, we are overthrown." Thus it was that Gareth forgot his resolve and revealed and announced his real name to the maiden, not in his hour of victory, of which he had seen so many in so short a time, but in the first hour of his defeat.

And Sir Lancelot was pleased, and he said in glad surprise, for he had mistaken the youth for one of the wicked brothers, from the star on the shield, "Prince—Sir Gareth, this mischance has been all due to me; for, indeed, I came but to help you, not to do you harm. And now you know I am Lancelot, full glad to find you as whole as on the day when King Arthur knighted you."

Then said Gareth with an eager concern that disarmed his words of aught of immodesty, "What? Is it you, Sir Lancelot? Was it your hand that threw me down? O! If some mischance had happened to mar the boast which we, your brother-knights, make of you

as the first and best, and the mightiest of our illustrious order, indeed some freak of fortune—which, however, is scarcely likely—had sent you down before a lesser spear, what a shame ! And O, what sadness have I escaped ! O Sir Lancelot ! How was I to know that it was you ? ”

And the maiden, finding that it was Sir Lancelot who had thus come upon them, grew petulant, and demanded, “ Wherefore, O Sir Knight, did you not come when I asked for you ? And wherefore do you now come unbidden ? For at last I had learnt to glory in my knave who, being ever rebuked by me, ever answered as courteously as any true knight. Alas ! But now, if he is a knight as it transpires, the marvel of his rare conduct ceases, and it leaves me in wonder as to why I have been thus imposed upon. I doubt very much, indeed, if I and my proud race be not scorned in my having been thus imposed upon. Where should truth lie else, if not in King Arthur’s Hall, and in his presence ? Why should all this concealment be ? O You ! Knight, Knave, Prince and Fool ! I hate you, and for ever.”

Now Sir Lancelot intervened. He said, first to

Gareth, "May you be blessed, Sir Gareth! For indeed you are a knight as true and brave as ever the king could wish." Then, turning to Lynette, he said, "Are you wise to deem him shamed when he has been but barely thrown down? I myself have been thrown down, indeed not once, but many a time. Victor and vanquished should be judged by the final issue. We have not yet fought with sword." "And your good horse, O Sir Gareth, and you yourself, are both weary. And let me confess that, yet, I felt the force of your onset none the less through that wearied lance of yours. And you have fared well indeed! For all the stream is freed; and you have wreaked the just wrath of our king on his foes. Nay, more! You have answered graciously when reviled, as this noble maiden vouches; and I myself saw but now how you made merry when overthrown." Then, again, addressing Gareth, he said, "Hail, Prince and Knight of our Table Round."

Then Sir Lancelot told the maiden the tale of Sir Gareth, from when he left his mother's Hall much against her will, to when he was made knight in secret by the king and granted the first quest that chanced there

after. But, after hearing all, the maiden answered with petulance still, "Well, well! To befool oneself is worse than being befooled by others. A cave, Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks, and forage for the horses, and flint for fire. And all about it flies a honey-suckle. Let us proceed and find the place."

And they searched and found it. After partaking of the food and drink, Gareth fell fast asleep. The maiden gazed long on the sleeping youth, softly saying to herself, "May your sleep be sound! For you have good cause for it. So you will wake lustily. Do I not now seem as tender to him as a mother? Ay, so do I. But then I am such a mother as had rated her child all day long, and made his day one of vexation to him and, then, while he slept, showered her blessings upon him! Good Lord! How sweetly smells the honey-suckle in the hushed night, as if the world were one of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!"

Then turning to Sir Lancelot, she clapped her hands and said to him; "Full glad am I, Sir Lancelot, to find that my goodly knave is a knight of noble birth. Mark me now, Sir

Knight. I have sworn to the black felon yonder, who has yet to be shamed and felled, that I would bring you to do battle with him. Else he would not let me pass out of the castle, wherein I had been kept confined with my sister Lyonors. So if you went with us, he would fight you first. Whoever can doubt that victory would be yours, if you fought? But, then, my knight-knave will miss the chance of crowning his brave deeds of this day with this final deed of glory."

Said Lancelot, "Perhaps the one you speak of as the fourth and last of this cruel band knows my shield. Let Sir Gareth, if he will, exchange his shield with mine. And he will do well, too, if he will ride my charger, which is fresh, and does not brook the spur, loving battle even as well as its rider." And the maiden replied with grateful grace, "It is like you to be so courteous in this, Sir Lancelot, as in all else you are."

And Sir Gareth, waking, fiercely clutched the shield of Sir Lancelot when it was offered him, thus apostrophising the lions engraved on it: "Climb ye, lance-splintering lions; for do not all spears become rotten sticks when they come

to meet you? Ah! How you seem eager to roar in your pride of strength and power! Do you climb and roar because you have left your lord Sir Lancelot! Mind it not, good beasts; for I will care for you well enough." Then turning to Sir Lancelot, he observed, "O Noblest Knight! Valour seems to stream from the lions of your shield through him who holds it. For I feel within me a new force that I have never felt before. And take it from me, I pray, that with this shield in my hand, I will not shame even the shadow of your great name. And now let us leave this place and set out on the quest."

## X

"Then sprang the happier day from underground:  
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance  
And revel and song, made merry over Death,"

AND the three in silence traversed the silent field. Sir Gareth fell to musing, and his mind slowly grew attuned to the surrounding Nature. As he rode on dreaming of his liege-lord, King Arthur, his eyes were drawn to the star in the heavens that went by the name of "Arthu's Harp," which now seemed to move in

counter-motion to the flying clouds. Presently a star shot across the sky, and Sir Gareth burst out at once, saying, "Lo ! the foe falls." Then an owl whooped ; and he cried, "Hark to the victor sounding his trumpet there !"

Suddenly Lynette, who rode on his left, clung to the shield that Sir Lancelot gave him, crying, "Yield, Sir Knight, yield this back to its owner. It is he that must fight this foe. I curse the tongue that reviled you all through yesterday, but yet begged of Sir Lancelot now to lend you horse and shield. Wonders have you wrought thus far ! I grant it freely. But even you cannot work miracles ; and it is a miracle, I know, for you to vanquish this last and dreadful foe. You have achieved glory enough in having flung the three. With my mind's eye I see you already maimed in conflict with this last. I am sure you cannot fling the fourth. He is far too mighty even for valour such as yours."

Such was the eager solicitude that the maiden had grown to entertain for Sir Gareth's safety. But he calmly turned to her and said, "Why do you think, damsel, that I cannot fling the fourth ? Be pleased to tell me all you know. I will not allow myself

to be scared. Neither rough face nor rough voice, nor brute-like bulkiness of limbs, nor yet an unbounded savagery, appal me so as to make me surrender my quest."

"Nay, Prince," said Lynette, "As God is my Judge, I have never looked on his face, for he never rides abroad by day. But I have seen him pass like a phantom, making the very night cold by his chilling presence. Nor yet have I ever heard his voice; for he always makes a page of his to serve as his mouth-piece; and this page comes and goes, and always speaks of his master as possessing the strength of ten mighty men, and when roused to anger, massacring all that fell within his reach, irrespective of their being men or women, young or old, and even soft and innocent babes. Some hold that he has swallowed infants' flesh, veritable monster! — O Prince! I went for Lancelot first. The quest is his. Give him back the shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "No, not I! But if he wants it back, he must fight for it. Of course it is only too likely that he will win it as the better man of the two. But yet he shall not have it back otherwise than in fair and manly fight."

Now Lancelot urged on him all the devices employed in their combats, when any one had to fight a mightier one than himself. He discoursed on how best to manage horse and lance, and sword and shield, so that where force was lacking, the deficiency might be made up by skill and dexterity. And his words were such as to produce instantaneous impression on the dullest listener.

Gareth listened calmly, but said in the end, "These are rules that you have expounded to me at such length. But I, for one, know but one device: that is, to dash against the foe with might and main, and win with a will. Yet I own that I have watched you come off victor in the joust; and I have seen your way of winning victory."

Lynette heard and saw that the youth could not be stayed back from the dreaded foe that still remained to conquer; and he sighed within herself and yielded way to Sir Gareth, saying, "May Heaven help you in this last great encounter!"

The three rode on for a while, conversing with one another. Clouds lowered in the sky covering up the stars, and presently darkened and sent down peals of thunder.

Suddenly Lynette made her palfrey halt, lifted an arm, and pointing ahead, whispered softly, "*There!*" And they looked, and saw, rising into view before them, a huge pavilion on a flat field beside the looming castle. It looked like a mountain peak as the black banners waving on its crest divided to the view the dark crimson hue on the low margin of the horizon. By the side of the pavilion, hung a long, black horn. For the space of a minute, as the pavilion came into view, the three were struck with silence. But as soon as Sir Gareth's eyes fell on the horn, he rushed forth and grasped it in his hand, and, before the others could stop him, blew it with a will.

The walls of the castle caught up the sound. A single light twinkled within it. Presently more lights came and yet more lights. And once again Sir Gareth blew the horn. Thereupon the hollow sound of trampling feet began to be heard, then the sound of muffled voices. And now the three could see the shadows of people flitting to and fro inside the castle. At last Lady Lyonors stood at a window surrounded by her maidens, her beauty enhanced by the numerous lights. And she waved her white hand in

courteous welcome to those that had come to succour her.

Sir Gareth blew the long horn yet once more. Though the horn had been blown three times, it drew out no response; indeed a long and deadly silence ensued. At last, black foldings went apart, and the huge pavilion slowly yielded up, perforce as it seemed, what it had afforded shelter to. And, lo, there appeared a figure perched high on a jet-black horse and in armour to match it in blackness, but displaying ribs and breast-plate of perfect whiteness, as those of Death himself. The white teeth, set off by the pervading dusk and the blackness of the entire figure, looked like the fleshless laughter of the dread god. The figure was that of the monster, the fourth and last of the fantastic allegory, who advanced slowly and with evident hesitation, some ten steps in the half-light; for already the dawn began to show itself dimly in the east. And there he stopped, and neither spoke a word nor seemed inclined to take one step further.

But Sir Gareth spoke, and his words were full of wrath as he said, "Fool, men say you

have the strength of ten mighty men. Why then do you seek to cause false terror by the petty trick of disguising your natural limbs and features in the ghastly form of Death? Have you no faith in your own strength of arms? Others not quite so dull as you would try to cover their ugliness by decking themselves in flowers, in pity of themselves."

But the figure neither moved nor spoke, and it only served to heighten the sense of horror produced by the grim and ghastly spectacle. Within the palace, a maiden swooned from sheer fright. Even the Lady Lyonors gave way to despair, and wrung her hands and wept at the thought of having to be the bride of "Night and Death." The hair stood on end on Sir Gareth's head within the helmet. Even Sir Lancelot felt the warm blood turn cold within him like ice. Indeed all that looked on that silent figure of Death were struck with profound horror.

All at once Sir Lancelot's charger (which, be it remembered, Sir Gareth rode) neighed fiercely, and Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him. Those that were able to see the sight through their terror saw that Death was cast to the ground by the onset. He slowly

rose from the ground! but Sir Gareth split his skull with a single stroke. One half of the cloven skull fell on one side, and the second half on the other. Then, with a stonger blow, the maiden knight clove the helmet that showed itself beneath the false skull that had been split in two. And out of the broken skull there emerged the bright face of a blooming boy, as fresh as a flower that had but just blossmed! And the poor boy cried in fear, "Slay me not, Sir Knight. It was my three brothers that put me up to this trick. Thus they sought to strike terror in the minds of all about the house, and thereby keep off the world from Lady Lyonors. Indeed they never dreamt that the passes would be passed."

Sir Gareth, who was not many months older than the supplianting boy, lent a gracious ear to his words; and, when he had ended, asked, "My fair child, what made you challenge the chief knight of Arthur's Hall?"

The boy replied, "Fair Sir, my brothers bade me do it. They hate the king, and they hate Sir Lancelot, the king's friend. They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream. They never dreamt that the passes would be passed."

Thus ended happily the first quest of Sir Gareth, prince and knight, bringing succour to the noble maiden in her utmost grief, and glory to the king, and to the royal race of which he was the youngest scion, and to the far-famed order of the ‘Table Round.’

Now there followed mirth and music, and laughter and joy in the lady’s castle. And the best joke of all that passed the round of the happy company was over Death. And they laughed loud and long at their own false and foolish fears at what, after all, turned out to be but a blooming boy.

But what befell thereafter is not truly known to any. Some say that Sir Gareth wedded the Lady Lyonors; but, in later times, others averred that he married her sister Lynette.

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